



ON SET WITH **GHOSTBUSTERS** CAST & DIRECTOR

Plus
DAN AYKROYD
WRITES FOR EMPIRE!

COLLECTOR'S
COVER
1 OF 2

EMPIRE

BEHIND THE SCENES
STAR TREK BEYOND
DOCTOR STRANGE
THE BFG
BEN-HUR



**4 MASSIVE
POSTERS!**

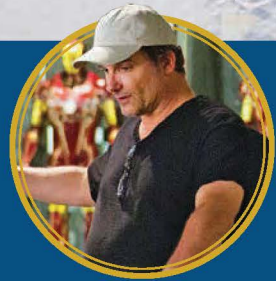


WARCRAFT

**CAN THE FANTASY EPIC BREAK THE VIDEO GAME MOVIE CURSE
TO BE THE NEXT LORD OF THE RINGS?**

**DIRECTORS
SPECIAL**

**THIS MONTH'S TOP
FILM HELMERS ON:**



SHANE BLACK
HIS WEIRD CAREER



RICHARD LINKLATER
HIS FAVOURITE ACTORS



DON CHEADLE
HIS TRUMPET



JODIE FOSTER
HER GREATEST ROLE



JUNE 2016 \$9.95 NZ \$10.95



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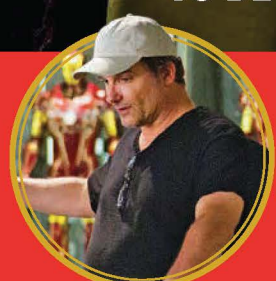
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Contents 06.16

Features

42 **WARCRAFT**

Director Duncan Jones and the cast of the new epic on how to avoid the curse of the video game film. Hopefully.

50 **ROSE BYRNE**

By any other name, she would still be as sweet... and funny and talented. Probably. We can't prove that.

54 **GHOSTBUSTERS**

If you're gonna call anyone, it might as well be Feig, Wiig and McCarthy to reboot a classic. We got one! (Actually all of them.)

64 **DAN AYKROYD**

The creator of *Ghostbusters* writes for *Empire* about how it all came about... and a tiny bit about vodka.

70 **SHANE BLACK**

The *Nice Guys* helmer looks back over a long career. But he's still not too old for this shit.

78 **RICHARD LINKLATER**

The most important director in Austin, Texas, picks his favourite actors to work with. Sometimes for a decade.

84 **DON CHEADLE**

The actor/ director/ musician/ funny guy/ great guy talks about being Miles Davis and Colonel Rhodes.

90 **JODIE FOSTER**

The *Money Monster* chief looks back to her defining turn as Clarice Starling in *The Silence Of The Lambs*.

Regulars

10 **PREMIERE**

The inside scoop on the upcoming *Star Trek Beyond*, *Dr Strange*, *The BFG* and *Ben-Hur*, plus the best of the upcoming Sydney Film Festival and we remember the purple genius, Prince.

14 **THE GRILL**

James McAvoy — slowly regrowing his hair, post *X-Men* — spills his guts about the most famous person he texts and deep-fried Mars Bars.

22 **BEST OF TIMES/ WORST OF TIMES**

Wilderpeople star Sam Neill relives the glories of working with Wim Wenders and Julia Roberts, and the pain of auditioning for James Bond. If you ever meet him, don't mention it. Really.



Australia's Travis Fimmel leads the charge in *Warcraft* (p. 42).



97 **REVIEW**

This month we lovingly examine *The Hateful Eight*, which spews out great scenes. Like Kurt Russell spewing out blood.

111 **MASTERPIECE**

The Life And Death Of Colonel Blimp — the none-more-British satire of Churchillian pomp. Churchillian. That's a fun word to say.

112 **GIVEAWAYS & PUZZLERS**

Get your crossword on. Also, the chance to win a swag of DVDs, Blu-rays or an *X-Files* poster using only your captioning cleverness. Get in there!

114 **CLASSIC SCENE**

Bill goshdarned Murray! That's the G-rated version of Tallahassee from the ever-quotable *Zombieland*. Rule one: go read this immediately!

InCinemas



- 30 THE NICE GUYS ★★★★★
- 32 MONEY MONSTER ★★★★★
- 33 EVERYBODY WANTS SOME!! ★★★★★
- 34 X-MEN: APOCALYPSE ★★★★★
- 37 ALICE THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS ★★★★★
- 38 MILES AHEAD ★★★★★
- HIGHLY STRUNG ★★★★★
- THE MEASURE OF A MAN ★★★★★
- GOD WILLING ★★★★★
- 39 HUNT FOR THE WILDERPEOPLE ★★★★★
- 40 REMEMBER ★★★★★
- THE MEDDLER ★★★★★
- CRIMINAL ★★★★★
- 41 MR. RIGHT ★★★★★
- ME BEFORE YOU ★★★★★
- THE ANGRY BIRDS MOVIE ★★★★★

FROM EXECUTIVE PRODUCER MICHAEL BAY

BLACK SAILS

THE COMPLETE THIRD SEASON

WAR AGAINST THE WORLD



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TV Guide

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JUNE 2016

THERE'S A FEW MOVIE "CURSES". SOME ARE UNTRUE (NOT everyone who appeared in *Poltergeist* has since died). Some are sort-of true (some actors who played Superman died.) And some are completely true (everyone who worked on *Paul Blart: Mall Cop* is dead inside.)

One of the most widely held actually has quite a lot of evidence: the curse of video game movies. Flicks adapted from movies have as good a chance of succeeding as Bob Hoskins does of passing for an Italian plumber. Even the successful ones aren't very good: *Need For Speed* with Aaron Paul took over \$200 million worldwide, but hamstrung by punishing reviews, failed to make back its budget in the US and visions of a franchise slipped into neutral.

Will *Warcraft* be the movie to break the streak? There's some reason to hope so – it's being made by fans who truly understand the game, for one thing; it's being directed by Duncan Jones, who is a far cry (fnar fnar) from Uwe Boll; and the game is itself inherently narrative-driven, as opposed to say, oh, *Angry Birds*.

The problem is, what makes a good game, and what makes a good movie? They're not necessarily the same thing. The most iconic elements of a successful game tend to be what's fun to do, not what's necessarily fun to watch. Watching birds slingshot each other into green pigs has none of the satisfaction of doing it yourself – but because it's the heart of the gameplay, it becomes the heart of the movie.

It doesn't have to be so literal. *Fight Club*, *Blade Runner* and *L.A. Confidential* all stray from the books they're based on, and in the hands of filmmakers who understand that what works on the page may not work on the screen, they're better for it. Or *Yellow Submarine*, which is not a film about a stoned Ringo talking crap. And that's okay. You'll never please all the fans – there will always be a fanatical element who just have it out for you right from the word go (as with some of the haters lining up to spew bile on the *Ghostbusters* reboot they haven't even seen yet – check out Paul Feig's response starting from page 54). But if the movies are good enough, they become their own justification.

Maybe what's needed is not to try to replicate games as movies, any more than you can literally replicate love as music, but to try to create something original that still captures the feeling, like sex and rock'n'roll, or toothache and Skrillex.

Or to put it another way, maybe what's needed on both sides of the equation is film makers to make movies, rather than 90-minute cut-scenes from games; and for the fans to approach adaptations, and reboots, as additions to, not replacements for, things that they love. These are movies. Let's try to have some fun.

May all your kernels be popped and buttery,



EDITOR
TIM KEEN

“**CLASSIC LINES OF THE MONTH**”

“I wanna be the one to kick that in the nuts”

p.45

“They were ectoplasmic tubes, marching across the stairs in the lightning. I just turned and fled”

p.66

“Just because something's been made for eight dollars doesn't mean it's going to be a great movie”

p.52

EMPIRE

(...and our favourite video game movie)

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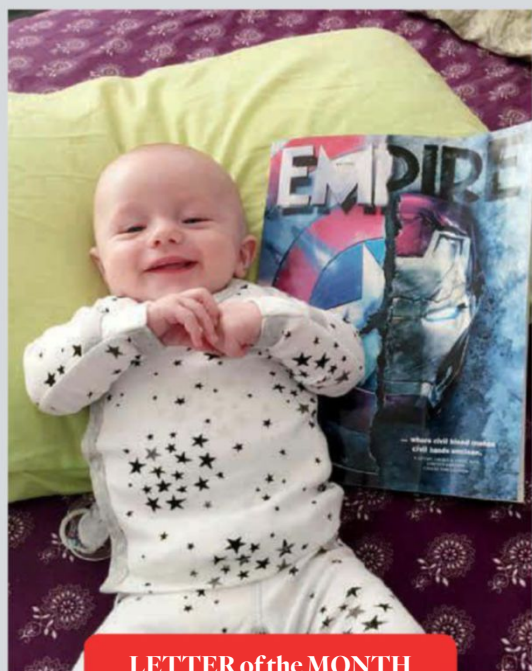


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LETTER of the MONTH

CIVIL WAAAAAAAAAH

World, meet Maverick – the newest addition to our Empire-loving family. He looks pretty happy about this issue.

JESSICA ASHBROOKE, TAMWORTH NSW

Hey there, little Maverick! (Serious request, Jessica: can you please have another baby so Mav can have a sibling called Goose? Thanks.) We're guessing from the stars on his jumpsuit that he's a Team Cap baby. (*whispers 'Hail Hydra' conspiratorially into baby's ear*)



EVERY letter printed this month scores a Blu-ray of Ben Stiller's comedy sequel *Zoolander 2*. So hot right now!

EMPIRE READERS VS SPOILERS

On a recent trip overseas, my sister and I were having dinner in a restaurant together when two guys came in and sat down at the table next to us. It became obvious to us that they had just come out of watching *Batman v Superman* and were enthusiastically talking about the plot and what happened in the movie, whereas my sister and I had not seen the movie yet but were planning to see it the day after. In an act of desperation to avoid spoilers (and move tables / tell the guys to shut up), I remembered that I had taken issue #181 of *Empire* mag with me to read on the plane and as it was still in my bag, I took it out and began to read aloud all the various movie reviews in order to drown out their *Bats v Supes* commentary. I guess it worked as they eventually stopped their commentary and we saw the movie "unspoiled". Thanks for helping us "spoil the spoilers"!

JEN, VIA EMAIL

Glad we could be of service, Jen. Note: if you're one of those people who discuss movie spoilers loudly in public, please don't. Thank you kindly.

CAPTAIN AMERICA TO THE FUTURE

I'm sure I'm not the only one who noticed that at the end of the *Captain America: Civil War* article it mentioned the movie being reviewed in a future issue, despite having been reviewed in the exact same issue. I was going to be my usual pedantic self about it but then my better half pointed out that when it came out

on DVD and the such it would be reviewed in a future issue. She is technically correct, which if *Futurama* has taught us nothing else, is the best kind of correct. I wonder how all the "normal" folk spend their time.

KYM SPICER, HUNTFIELD HEIGHTS, SA
 Thanks, Kym's wife – we're glad that you picked up on our, ahem, cleverness.

WAR: WHAT IS IT GOOD FOR? ABSOLUTELY EVERYTHING

Getting up on April 30th, Saturday morning, all pumped and ready to see *Captain America: Civil War*. Me and my brothers chose the 12:45 PM session.

We got our ACE coupons and

I got my Spider-Man/Iron Man team-up shirt donned and ready to go. And just when it couldn't be any more of *Civil War* day, I open my mailbox and see this gloriously awesome cover telling me "This is gonna be epic."

Thank you *Empire* for serving up a nice dish of fate.

CHRISTOPHER SPENCER, VIA EMAIL

Happy to hear that we added some "Phwoar!" to your War.

FROM THE HAND OF JAI

I've been buying *Empire* magazine for over 12 months now and one thing that keeps me going is the awesome posters provided. Shout out to the person that came up with the *Terminator: Genisys* / *Birdman* poster cause I got Jai Courtney to autograph it last year.

CLEON, VIA EMAIL

A signed *Genisys* poster could be worth... a couple of bucks? (Don't worry, *Suicide Squad* will surely up its worth.)

Tweet Us!
 I love #BenAffleck as a director,
 so bring on him writing and
 directing #Batman
 FyshStyx
 @SomethingFyshy





WHERE'S WALL-E?

Clearly, the redemption narrative sells. This is why the *Finding Dory* article featured in *Empire* issue #182 and its account of Andrew Stanton's homecoming made for a solid read. Yet in the name of smart rhetoric, an important truth has been omitted. In the piece you seemed to suggest that the *Finding Nemo* director left the animation scene after his first maritime success. However, have we already forgotten about his stellar follow-up, the Oscar-winning animated gem *Wall-E*? As fitting as it would be to simply emphasise his reputation for submarine adventure, *John Carter* wasn't Stanton's first trip to the stars. Perhaps this truth would've ruined a good story. Next time, however, please don't leave out everyone's favourite trash-compacting hero. That would be a Worr-E.

DYLAN R., VIA EMAIL

Forgive us Dylan, we've got that thing that Dory's got... what's it called? ...Hey look, a shiny thing! (*beats hasty exit out back entrance of building*)

THOR'S HAMMER TIME

Re-reading old *Empire* issues as you do on ANZAC Day, and in the April 2015 issue I found the 'THOR-Y Of Everything', an awesome diagram of the Marvel Universe past and present. I really want to explore this Tom Cruise *Minority Report*-style, but alas I'm not much of a mural painter. Can you consider this as a giant poster (like *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*)? If not please send me these pages as images so I can get it printed myself and waste a lot of hours. Yours, Thor's Hammer.

CHRISTIE, HOBART, TAS

Thor's Hammer can talk?! Impressive. Here we were thinking it was only good for home renos!

MARVEL V DC: AND THE WINNER IS...?

Hey *Empire*, now that the dust has settled on *Civil War* v *Batman v Superman*, I think it's time we make the call: Marvel rules the roost and DC sucks the big one. The formers has a slew of

classic films (*Iron Man*, *The Avengers*, *Captain America: The Winter Soldier*) and all DC has is two decent Nolan Bat-films. The civil war has been won.

ALAN S., VIA EMAIL

Thems fighting words, Alan! What say you, dear Empire readers? Sound off!

IN THE OFFICE THIS MONTH



*Empire's Tim Keen, James Jennings and Craig Carroll can't decide if they're Team Cap or Team Iron Man at the *Civil War* premiere, so sit on the fence. Or carpet.*

SPINEQUOTE HONOURROLE

#182

"Sixty per cent of the time, it works every time."

THE FILM

Anchorman: The Legend Of Ron Burgundy (2004)

THE CONNECTION

Said by Paul Rudd who's in *Captain America: Civil War*

THE WINNER

Angus Sinclair, via email

THE REWARD

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Premiere



> WILL FERRELL, CATHERINE KEENER AND MICHAEL CERA ON *FOR CAPTAIN DAD* > JOHNNY DEPP



ON-SET EXCLUSIVE!

OUT OF DARKNESS

STAR TREK BEYOND HERALDS THE FRANCHISE'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

SET PHASERS TO PARTY. *STAR TREK* IS turning 50, and it's doing so in style with *Star Trek Beyond*. It's the third *Trek* film to explore strange new worlds with the rebooted cast, and it might once again change the status quo. "It was important to really deconstruct the idea of *Star Trek*, the idea of the Federation, and why it's special," says new director Justin Lin. "We'll be poking at a lot of different things."

Following their brush with Khan in *Star Trek Into Darkness*, James T. Kirk (Chris Pine) and the crew of the Enterprise have spent two years nosing around the final frontier, and have come to rest at a Federation outpost. There they encounter Idris Elba's alien nutjob, Krall, who rains fire and scorn on the Federation's happy-clappy ways.

"We're gathering a great community within the galaxy, but to what end?" says Simon Pegg, who co-wrote the screenplay as well as playing Scotty. "What's the point of it all?"

Lin, who takes over from J.J. Abrams, turned *Fast & Furious* into a mega-franchise. That doesn't mean his *Trek* will be all rocket-fueled ridiculousness. "I came from the indie world and my approach has always been [story first]," he says. "This is no different." But with the trailer promising an explosive moment for the Enterprise, this should be a 50th birthday party to remember. **OLLY RICHARDS**

STAR TREK BEYOND IS OUT ON JULY 21.

AND MARION COTILLARD JOIN BRETT RATNER'S FRENCH SCANDAL DRAMA *THE LIBERTINE*

ON-SET EXCLUSIVE!

THE SORCERER'S APPRENTICE

BENEDICT CUMBERBATCH TRAVELS TO ANOTHER DIMENSION IN *DOCTOR STRANGE*

IT'S A VERY DIFFERENT FEEL, different hero and different set of circumstances to what we've seen before," says Benedict Cumberbatch, star of Marvel's forthcoming magical mystery tour *Doctor Strange*. "It's another moment during Marvel's evolution."

Back in the '60s, *Doctor Strange* was the hippies' favourite. Dr Stephen Strange, an arrogant Manhattan neurosurgeon who travels to the Himalayas to recover from a career-ending accident and ends up as the Sorcerer Supreme, opened the door to Marvel's most psychedelic adventures. Under the tutelage of Tilda Swinton's Ancient One, Cumberbatch's tormented hero learns magic and discovers hidden parallel dimensions. This multiverse was teased at the end of *Ant-Man*, but *Doctor Strange* goes the whole nine yards, with major ramifications for all of the Marvel Cinematic Universe.

The Ancient One will teach Strange and, through him, the audience about the multiverse. "[It has] many dimensions," says Marvel Studios president Kevin Feige, "some of which are mindbending, some scary, all of which need to be kept at bay, lest they come into our dimension."

Director Scott Derrickson, a Strange-lover since childhood, promises retina-popping vistas true to the cosmic visions of the comic's creator, Steve Ditko. "We felt free to go as far as we could imagine, so we're doing a lot of things that I think have not been done before," says Derrickson. "Once we'd crossed a certain line we just kept going." **DORIAN LYNKEY**

DOCTOR STRANGE IS OUT ON OCTOBER 27.

> ADAM DRIVER IN, MICHAEL SHANNON OUT FOR STEVEN SODERBERGH'S *LOGAN LUCKY* > JOAQUIN

Premiere

JUNE 2016

013



PHOENIX TO STAR IN *YOU WERE NEVER REALLY HERE* > TERESA PALMER CAST IN *THE TWISTED*

JAMES McAVOY

THE GRILL

PROFESSOR X? PROFESSOR POTTYMOUTH, MORE LIKE

Who is the most famous person in your phone contacts?

It's a toss-up, really, between Hugh [Jackman] and Jennifer [Lawrence].

Which one do you text most?

Hugh.

On a scale of one to 10, how famous are you?

I'd say six-and-a-half. That means people go, "You're that guy from that movie I like, but I don't remember your name." That happens quite a lot.

Can you move unmolested in public?

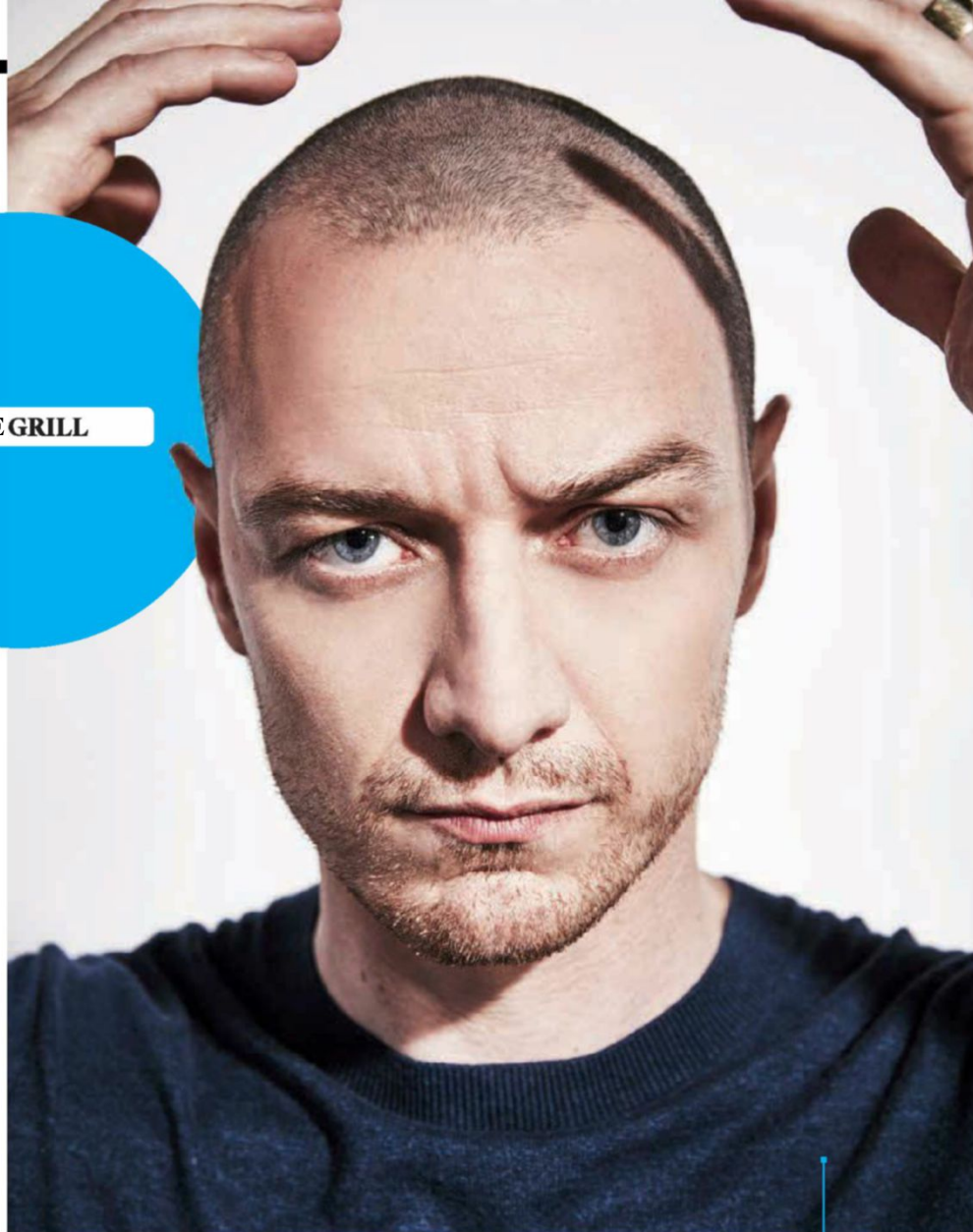
Quite often. Although when the trailer for *Apocalypse* came out, that shafted that up. I was like, "Check me out being bald, nobody fucking recognises me." Then the trailer comes out and everyone's like, "Professor X, what's up?" I had to start growing my hair again.

Who were you in your first school play?

A fucking chapter narrator in a primary school panto. All the other kids got to play parts. Honestly, all I got to do was come on, read off a piece of paper, and then walk off. That was it.

An alien lands on Earth and asks to see a James McAvoy double bill. What films do you choose?

Atonement and *Filth*. They're so weirdly different, hopefully the aliens would go, "Wow, the same human being can do both those weird things? This race is



clearly not just definable by one thing, therefore we won't destroy them because we think they're just violent maniacs. They're clearly capable of being selfless English people as well!"

When was the last time you cared about money?

Fuck. All the fucking time, no matter how much I've made from *X-Men* which, thank you God, has sorted us out. I feel I'm really generous with what I've got if it's somebody that I love, but otherwise I'm quite tight.

Have you ever embraced the Scottish cliché and deep-fried a Mars bar?

I have! I did it posh, though, with filo

pastry and a little bit of cream in there. You freeze it all and drop it into the deep fat fryer for 45 seconds. It's brilliant.

Do people quote your lines back at you?

I get, "Mutant and proud," a bit, but that's not even one of my fucking lines!

When did you last walk out of a movie?

Recently. It was during Oscar season. It was a very prominent, well-decorated film. I can't tell you what it is. I thought it was boring as shit.

Who was your first movie crush?

Kim Cattrall. Who I know now as well, which is weird. "Aw, Kim, I'm so glad we're friends, but I still totally fancy you."

On a scale of one to 10, how hairy is your arse?

Two-and-a-half. It's not that hairy. I'm really hairy on my legs, but it thins out in a male-pattern leg-balding way on my upper thighs. **CHRIS HEWITT**

X-MEN: APOCALYPSE IS OUT NOW.

DID YOU KNOW?

→ He's allergic to horses.

→ His nickname is Floyd.

→ He was a confectioner before switching to acting.



What's the best thing about your hometown? Glasgow? Apart from the fact that my family is there, deep-fried everything. It's pretty good.

FROM STEVEN SODERBERGH STARRING CLIVE OWEN

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FIRST LOOK EXCLUSIVE!

BREAKING FX GROUND

STEVEN SPIELBERG PUSHES THE CG ENVELOPE
AGAIN WITH ROALD DAHL'S CLASSIC *THE BFG*

IT'S A BIG JOB," SAYS STEVEN Spielberg, appropriately enough, about *The BFG*. "There are thousands of effects shots. I think it's the most ambitious motion capture of a character that any film has ever done." Just one look at Mark Rylance, working with Spielberg again so soon after bagging the Best Supporting Actor Oscar for *Bridge Of Spies*, confirms that. As the towering beanpole at the heart of Roald Dahl's classic 1982 children's book, this is Rylance as you've never seen him before. This is a Rylance big enough to give Frank Stallone, who famously railed against the British actor pipping his big brother Sly to that Oscar, pause for thought. This is a Rylance almost entirely composed of pixels.

The *BFG* — Big Friendly Giant if we're being formal — is squarely in Spielberg's sweet spot, using cutting-edge effects in the service of a small relationship picture. It starts with the giant doing something distinctly unfriendly by snatching young Sophie (Ruby Barnhill) from a London orphanage and whisking her off to

Giant Country. But a fast friendship forms, meaning the emotional weight of the film relies on the believability of the VFX as much as the performances.

"Steven was very keen on having the actors in the same space, even though Mark Rylance would be 24 feet tall," says producer Frank Marshall. "A Simulcam enabled him to see on a monitor what it is going to look like. It's two separate cameras that put BFG and Sophie together in the same shot. It was a big leap forward in putting CG characters into the real world."

But it was not just the title character who gave Spielberg nightmares. For the director, the "toughest part" came with the creation of the phantasmagoric lands of Giant Country and Dream Country, where the dreams of the world are harvested. "We had to create everything from scratch," says Spielberg. "None of it is real... but it looks real." What does a real land of dreams look like? It's not long until we find out.

IAN FREER

THE BFG IS OUT ON JUNE 30.

"I'm, like, Method. I got, like, so high for *High*. Huh? It's called *High Rise*? Well, like, shit."

SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL PICKS

THE BEST OF THE FEST

EMPIRE CASTS ITS EYE ACROSS THE SFF'S IMPRESSIVE 2016 LINE-UP TO CHOOSE OUR MUST-SEES...



1 BORN TO BE BLUE

Ethan Hawke puts on the shades and picks up the brass in his highly praised performance to play iconic musician/heroin addict Chet Baker, the "James Dean of jazz". Writer-director Robert Budreau follows up his short *The Many Deaths Of Chet Baker* with this biopic, which covers the period of Baker's life in the late-'60s when he attempts a comeback after years of drug abuse, financial loss and public disgrace.



2 CAPTAIN FANTASTIC

Actor turned director Matt Ross (*The Aviator*) nabs himself a fine cast (Viggo Mortensen, Frank Langella, Aussie Nicholas Hamilton) to tell a tale based on his upbringing as a rural family — a hippie dad (Mortensen) and his six kids — go on a road trip which sees the clan unravel as the young brood experience the outside world for the first time.

Below: Michael Peña and Alexander Skarsgård get down and dirty in *War On Everyone*.



3 HIGH-RISE

British director Ben Wheatley (*Kill List*, *Sightseers*) brings J.G. Ballard's 1975 science fiction novel to the big screen with a killer cast including Tom Hiddleston, Jeremy Irons, Sienna Miller, Luke Evans and Elisabeth Moss. It's *Die Hard* meets dystopian future as the inhabitants of a luxury apartment building go all *Lord Of The Flies* and descend into tribal warfare.

4 WAR ON EVERYONE

Sydney Film Festival favourite John Michael McDonagh (*The Guard*, *Calvary*) turns his hand to rowdy buddy cop movies in this pitch black comedy about two dirty detectives (Alexander Skarsgård and Michael Peña) based in New Mexico who beat up, rob and blackmail all of the unlucky criminals who happen upon their turf.

> MICHAEL AND PETER SPIERIG SET TO DIRECT THE SUPERNATURAL THRILLER *WINCHESTER*



5 ELVIS & NIXON

One of modern history's weirdest hang-times is dramatised in this political satire that looks at the time — December 21, 1970 to be exact — Elvis (here played by Michael Shannon) rocked up at the gates of the White House to talk to President Nixon (Kevin Spacey) to discuss his dream to become a "Federal-Agent-At-Large". As you do.



6 SING STREET

UK director John Carney (*Once*, *Begin Again*) comes with another music-centric corker, this one set in 1980s Dublin as a young boy gets shifted to a tough inner-city school and decides to form a band to impress a girl he spies in the playground. Boasting a soundtrack featuring The Police, The Cure and Duran Duran, this looks like a nostalgic treat crammed with good tunes.



7 WEINER

Follows the sexting scandal of former congressman and aptly named Anthony Weiner, a New York City mayoral candidate who was busted sending dick pics — not once, but *twice*. Co-directed by former Weiner aide Josh Kriegman, this won the Grand Jury Prize for Documentary at Sundance 2016 and promises to be a fast, funny and insightful look at the campaign trail.



8 GOLDSTONE

Aussie director Ivan Sen puts in the extra hours (he wrote, shot, scored and edited) on his follow-up to thriller *Mystery Road*, which sees the same cop, Det. Jay Swan (Aaron Pedersen), on the hunt for a missing woman. Co-starring Jacki Weaver, David Wenham and David Gulpilil, this promises crime intrigue in the Outback.



9 SWISS ARMY MAN

The weirdest and possibly most divisive film at SFF could be this: a black comedy being billed as "*Cast Away* meets *Weekend At Bernie's*" that sees a stranded man (Paul Dano) have his plan to hang himself go south when a farting corpse with supernatural powers (a wand-less Daniel Radcliffe). Wanna see a dead Harry Potter get ridden like a jet ski? Here's your chance, film fans.



10 TEENAGE KICKS

A short (the award winning *Drowning*) turned feature thanks to a successful Pozible campaign, *Teenage Kicks* is a coming of age drama from writer-director Craig Boreham that looks like an arthouse winner. Shot in Sydney's inner west, it tells the story of Mik (Miles Santzo), a teenager from a migrant family grappling with the death of an older brother and his sexuality.

SEN-SATIONAL!

IVAN SEN DISCUSSES HIS FAUX SEQUEL *GOLDSTONE*



You must be pumped that *Goldstone's* world premiere is opening the Sydney Film Festival?

Definitely. And for the second time in four years after *Mystery Road*. It's doubly exciting. The State Theatre holds 2000 people, it's a huge room! You're right, I'm pumped but it's not just an honour this time, it's an extreme honour!

Is it a daunting prospect showing your film to an audience for the first time? You're writer, director, cinematographer and composer — this is pretty much you on the screen...

Because I am doing all that, I don't stop the film until I feel it is finished and ready for an audience. So I guess I'm not too worried because I pushed myself to my limit more than any of my other films. It was just me who said, "Okay, enough is enough!" [Laughs] Saying that, it's always exciting and I'll be standing at the back of the audience, trying to read them and see what parts of the movie they get and understand and take that on board for next time.

When you were making *Mystery Road* did you always know you wanted to further explore the character of Jay Swan in another film?

Not initially, but as I finished *Mystery Road* I felt like there was a whirlpool of emotion that I hadn't explored. I did have a feeling that I'd have another crack at Jay Swan. The same character in a whole new adventure. Aaron [Pedersen] was also very keen to do another one. Obviously.

Talking of Aaron, the film has an amazing cast. Did you write the characters with the actors in mind?

Well, naturally the role of Jay was already Aaron's but I also wrote the role of *Goldstone's* Mayor specifically for Jacki Weaver. Then I pursued her until I got her [laughs]. I really, really wanted her for the role. After writing the character I felt that I couldn't make the film without her. I guess actors don't mind hearing that. She's so busy but I threw in a bit of a curveball to her. I said I'll shoot this film when you are free. Actors like to hear that too!

DAVID MICHAEL BROWN

GOLDSTONE OPENS THE SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL ON JUNE 8 AND HITS CINEMAS ON JULY 7. THE SFF RUNS FROM JUNE 8 – 19. VISIT WWW.SFF.ORG.AU FOR MORE.

020

JUNE 2016

Premiere



> ANTONIO BANDERAS TO STAR IN CROWDFUNDED ACTION COMEDY *SALTY* > AARON TAYLOR-

FIRST LOOK EXCLUSIVE!

CHARIOT OF FIRE

BIGGER THAN *BEN-HUR*?

THERE ARE FEW SEQUENCES in cinema history as spectacular as the chariot race from 1959's *Ben-Hur*. Remaking it seems like an act of folly, but Timur Bekmambetov, the brave soul who's giving it a go with the new *Ben-Hur*, has an ace up his sleeve. And, surprisingly, it's not just a CG ace. "Our technology is now far away from what they had previously," the Russian-Kazakh director tells *Empire*, "and the rigs we have are unbelievable. The goal for me is to shoot these action scenes so realistically that the audience feels that they're in the chariot, driving."

Empire bears witness to the filmmaker's ambition, from the stands of a newly constructed Circus Maximus built at Rome's Cinecittà Studios. The story's two great rivals, Judah Ben-Hur (Jack Huston) and Messala (Toby Kebbell) snap and snarl as their racing rigs, with super-small wheels, are dragged behind camera trucks, while hundreds of extras clap and cheer in the stands. Later on, real horses replace the trucks. "And these chariots have got no suspension, no brakes," continues Bekmambetov. "We have eight drivers, 24 horses, all running together. The dust and shit flies everywhere. It is scary."

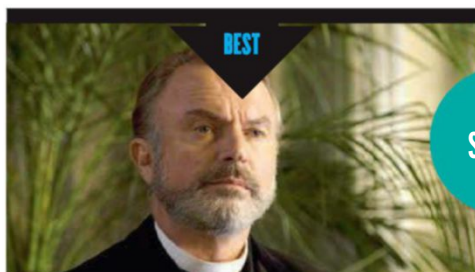
The '59 *Ben-Hur*, the first film to win 11 Oscars, has been remade before (Heston voiced a 2003 animation), but filling epic sandals isn't easy. "The last film was this giant, so you don't want to make a crappy movie," says Huston. "You want to make something special. I feel we're doing that." The race is on. **WILL LAWRENCE**

BEN-HUR IS OUT ON AUGUST 25.

BEST OF TIMES/WORST OF TIMES

SAM NEILL

THE HUNT FOR THE WILDERPEOPLE STAR TALKS LOVING BEING A KING AND LOATHING BEING BOND



SCENE

On *Dean Spanley*, a scene with Peter O'Toole took three days to shoot. It was me talking and I was terribly nervous. I said, "Peter, I'm sorry, you've had to listen to this crap for three days." He said, "Dear boy, I'm enchanted." I thought, "I'll be okay now."



On *Possession*, there's a scene where I slap Isabelle Adjani and [director] Andrzej Zulawski said, "You just have to slap her." I said, "I can't hit a woman." He said, "You've got to do it," and Isabelle said, "You've got to do it." I was in tears afterwards.

I've hardly done any auditions but I did audition for *Pretty Woman*. I thought I was pretty good, but obviously not good enough! It was fun to have a day opposite Julia Roberts. She was a gas, larger than life.



AUDITION



When my agent bullied me into doing a James Bond audition. One of the worst days of my life. I didn't want to be there, and I was so uncomfortable all day. There was nothing good about the day at all.

I did a film with Wim Wenders, *Until The End Of The World*, in winter in the centre of Australia. I'd shot in Australia before in mid-summer and it was unbearable, but in winter it was extraordinary. I loved it.

LOCATION

I think the wettest and coldest I've been was on *Jurassic Park III*. We were on a boat about to be eaten by a dinosaur, with these immense rain machines. They bucket down 50 times harder than any natural rain, so we were so cold. All for the art.

Restoration, where I played Charles II. [Costume designer] Jim Acheson was a perfectionist – he got an Oscar. Every time I emerged I'd be underneath at least ten layers, right down to the underwear of the period.



COSTUME



When we did *Event Horizon*, I ended up as a weird monster, covered in prosthetics. Basically naked, with a weird pouch where my genitals had been torn away. We were shooting at Pinewood in mid-winter. It was wet, cold and horrible.

A couple of weeks ago I was at Sundance with a little New Zealand film called *Hunt For The Wilderpeople*. When we walked on stage, we got a standing ovation. I thought, "What a wonderful thing that is!" Completely surprising. It's a moment you don't often have.

MOMENT



It wasn't fun when the FIFA film [2014's *United Passions*] was released in the same week Sepp Blatter was accused of wrongdoing. But it was a film I enjoyed doing. **CHRIS HEWITT**

HUNT FOR THE WILDERPEOPLE IS OUT NOW.



Ian McKellen has made a Shakespeare app for your iPad. Sadly, it's not called *Angry Bards*, but *Heuristic Shakespeare*.



Eddie The Eagle director Dexter Fletcher may be the voice of UK McDonald's ads, but he doesn't get free meals. There's no justice.



Alfie Allen – Theon Greyjoy/Reek in *Game Of Thrones* – is quite gracious if you happen to spill his beer. Sorry, Alfie.



The original title of Don Cheadle's Miles Davis biopic, *Miles Ahead*, was *Kill The Trumpet Player Vol. 1*. We prefer that one, actually.

SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

8-19 JUNE

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OPENING NIGHT + GALA GOLDSTONE



WED 8 JUN 7:30PM STATE THEATRE
FRI 10 JUN 7:30PM CASULA POWERHOUSE
SAT 11 JUN 2:30PM STATE THEATRE
SUN 12 JUN 8:30PM HAYDEN ORPHEUM CREMORNE
Tickets are now on sale for the world premiere of Ivan Sen's *Goldstone*. This stunning outback noir will screen on Opening Night, which is proudly presented by Lexus Australia.

MISS SHARON JONES!



SUN 12 JUN 8:15PM EVENT CINEMAS GEORGE ST
TUE 14 JUN 8:20PM DENDY OPERA QUAYS
The life and music of R&B queen Sharon Jones: a heartfelt documentary, directed by two-time Oscar winner Barbara Kopple (*Harlan County, USA; American Dream*).

CAPTAIN FANTASTIC



THU 16 JUN 6:35PM STATE THEATRE
SAT 18 JUN 8:30PM HAYDEN ORPHEUM CREMORNE
Funny, touching and fresh from Sundance and Cannes; Viggo Mortensen in one of his best performances as a father raising his children far from the modern world.

CINEMA, MON AMOUR



THU 9 JUN 10:00AM STATE THEATRE
FRI 10 JUN 8:30PM DENDY OPERA QUAYS
A quietly amusing tale of eccentric manager and movie tragic Victor Purice's tireless attempts to breathe life into one of the last remaining cinemas in Romania.

LIFE, ANIMATED



SAT 18 JUN 4:15PM STATE THEATRE
SUN 19 JUN 11:00AM EVENT CINEMAS GEORGE ST
Sundance award winner: Oscar winner Roger Ross Williams' heart-warming documentary tells the unique story of a boy with autism and his love of Disney films.

GOAT



SUN 12 JUN 4:00PM EVENT CINEMAS GEORGE ST
MON 13 JUN 8:15PM DENDY NEWTOWN
Selected for Sundance and the Berlinale, a powerful exposé of the dangerous 'hazing' rituals of campus fraternities across the US, featuring a great dramatic turn from Nick Jonas.

THE MUSIC OF STRANGERS — YO-YO MAMA AND THE SILK ROAD ENSEMBLE



SAT 18 JUN 9:30AM STATE THEATRE
SUN 19 JUN 3:45PM HAYDEN ORPHEUM CREMORNE
A music documentary gem from Oscar-winning director Morgan Neville (*20 Feet from Stardom*) about the legendary cellist and a diverse group of dedicated musicians.

STRIKE A POSE



FRI 10 JUN 6:00PM EVENT CINEMAS GEORGE ST
SAT 11 JUN 6:30PM DENDY NEWTOWN
25 years after the controversial documentary *In Bed with Madonna*, the 'Blond Ambition' dancers — now out of the celebrity spotlight — are re-united and re-exposed.

LOVESONG



MON 13 JUN 1:00PM EVENT CINEMAS GEORGE ST
TUE 14 JUN 8:35PM EVENT CINEMAS GEORGE ST
Indie darling Jena Malone and rising star Riley Keough shine in this exploration of the ambiguously close bond between a lonely soft-spoken woman and her free-spirited friend.

HIGH-RISE



FRI 10 JUN 7:30PM SKYLINE DRIVE IN BLACKTOWN
SAT 11 JUN 5:45PM EVENT CINEMAS GEORGE ST
Ben Wheatley runs riot with his vision of J.G. Ballard's dystopian novel about residents of a luxury tower descending into savagery, starring Tom Hiddleston and Sienna Miller.

WAR ON EVERYONE



FRI 10 JUN 9:15PM STATE THEATRE
SUN 12 JUN 2:00PM EVENT CINEMAS GEORGE ST
From the director of SFF favourites *The Guard* and *Calvary*, this pitch-black satirical homage to buddy-cop movies is about two renegade police wreaking havoc in New Mexico.

TOKYO STORY



WED 8 JUN 6:00PM DENDY OPERA QUAYS
A beautiful restoration of Japanese master Yasujiro Ozu's graceful masterpiece, widely regarded as one of the greatest films ever made.



1300 733 733 SFF.ORG.AU

TRIBUTE

PRINCE

1958 – 2016

DEARLY BELOVED...

HE MAY HAVE BEEN KNOWN to millions of fans as the workaholic tunesmith who played guitar like Jimi Hendrix, grooved like James Brown and sung like a purple angel, but it was the movies that gave Prince Nelson Rogers his big break.

In 1978 Warner Bros signed an unprecedented three album record deal with the 17-year-old wunderkind. The kid went on to play 27 instruments on his debut album *For You*. It took, however, five more albums for Prince to achieve the blockbuster success he craved. *Purple Rain* would go on to sell 13 million copies in the US alone, spend 24 weeks on top of the Billboard charts and win the pint-sized popster an Oscar for Best Original Song Score.

Hailed by Quentin Tarantino as the greatest rock 'n' roll film ever made, the movie and its accompanying soundtrack became a pop culture phenomenon. Singles *When Doves Cry*, *Let's Go Crazy* and the title track smashed pop charts around the world and *Darling Nikki* upset future Second Lady Of The United States Tipper Gore so much it almost singlehandedly helped introduce the now-standard Parental Advisory stickers on albums. The film was the eleventh biggest film of the year making over \$US69million. In 1984, everybody was watching Prince.

Unfortunately lightning didn't strike twice for the Purple One on the big screen. He went on to direct *Under The Cherry Moon* (1986) and *Purple Rain* sequel *Graffiti Bridge* (1990), but both performed dismally at the box office.

No matter what Prince went on to achieve, in the studio or on the stage, *Purple Rain* is the film, the album and the song that he will always be remembered for.

Long may he (purple) reign.

DAVID MICHAEL BROWN



• RON CALELLA, LTD./WIREIMAGE

> MORGAN FREEMAN AND TOMMY LEE JONES CAST IN ACTION COMEDY *VILLA CAPRI* > JACK BLACK



TO STAR OPPOSITE DWAYNE JOHNSON IN *JUMANJI* > *PREDATOR 4* TO BEGIN FILMING IN OCTOBER

REPORT

LET THE ROGUE ONE IN

GARETH EDWARDS'S *STAR WARS* SPIN-OFF LAUNCHES

BLACK-CLAD stormtroopers staring impassively as something burns in the background. AT-ATs clomping around on a beach. And not a lightsaber in sight. Gareth Edwards's *Rogue One* is *Star Wars*, alright, but viewed from a whole new angle.

We've known for some time that the first in the *Star Wars* Story anthology, which will fill in the blanks around the Skywalker-focused *Episodes*, would centre on the Rebel mission to steal the plans to the first Death Star, and that it

would be more of a war movie than any *Star Wars* yet. When the movie's stunning first trailer hit in early April, it was a surprising and pleasing mix of classic references (not one, but two Gonk droids) and things we haven't seen in *Star Wars* before.

Although we know, broadly speaking, that the Rebel's scheme to half-inch the plans proves successful, we know little else. The trailer confirms that Felicity Jones's character is called Jyn Erso, a badass loner who can take out a squad of stormtroopers in a blink, but all other character names remain elusive, including Diego Luna's Rebel captain and Ben Mendelsohn's Imperial villain, wearing a uniform that may mark him as

a Grand Admiral. But that didn't stop the speculation — is Jyn Erso the mother of *The Force Awakens*' Rey? Is Donnie Yen's robed fighter blind? Does one shot, of a black-clad figure kneeling in a room containing Imperial guards, suggest the presence of Darth Vader and the Emperor? Was one Death Star corridor scene filmed in Canary Wharf Tube station?

The answer to the last question, amazingly, is yes. The rest will have to wait for December. Unless we put a team together and break into Lucasfilm HQ to find the *Rogue One* plans...

CHRIS HEWITT

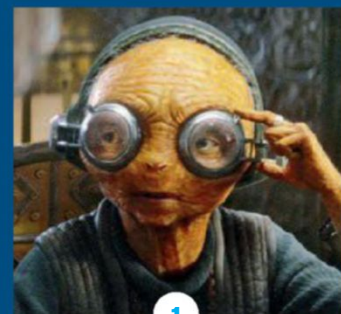
ROGUE ONE: A STAR WARS STORY
IS OUT ON DECEMBER 15.

Felicity Jones as Jyn Erso, undercover among the Empire forces.



- 1 Ben Mendelsohn in what looks like the uniform of a Grand Admiral.
- 2 AT-ATs run amok in the tropics.
- 3 Forest Whitaker as a battle-scarred veteran, we're guessing.
- 4 Donnie Yen faces down blasters, with a stick.

THIS MONTH IN STAR WARS



1

CONFIRMED

The official announcement of filming for *Episode VIII* included Lupita Nyong'o's name on the cast list, so we never doubted that Maz Kanata would be bringing her funky goggles and centuries-old wisdom back to the galaxy. And it was confirmed when Rian Johnson posted a shot of Kanata on monitors on the *Episode VIII* set. Wonder if she still has her eye on Chewie...

2

REVEALED

The second season of hit animated show *Star Wars Rebels* came to a thrilling conclusion with a one-hour episode that held shocking revelations, appearances from Darths Maul and Vader (the latter voiced by James Earl Jones), and the promise next year will tie in more closely with the films.

3

MUCH MISSED

Erik Bauersfeld, the man behind the voice of Admiral Ackbar – and therefore “It’s a trap!”, one of the most iconic *Star Wars* lines – passed away in early April at the age of 93. He also provided the voice of another *Return Of The Jedi* icon – Jabba The Hutt’s right-hand Twi’lek, Bib Fortuna – and returned to voice Ackbar in *The Force Awakens*.



CLASSIC PIC

ROALD GOLD

WILDER'S GOLDEN TICKET

GENE WILDER WAS PICKED AS WILLY WONKA OVER all six Monty Python members, as well as Peter Sellers, Fred Astaire, and – Roald Dahl's personal pick – Spike Milligan; it was far from the only thing director Mel Stuart changed from Dahl's vision. Eight more of Dahl's books have been turned into films, including *The BFG* this month, nurtured into existence by Steven Spielberg; but 1971's *Willy Wonka & The Chocolate Factory* cast the widest influence, not least on this month's *Alice Through The Looking Glass* – could Johnny Depp look any more like Wilder? (Ironically more so than he did when he played Willy Wonka.) Roald Dahl ended up disappointed by the '71 Wonka film, saying it should have been more about Charlie than Willy; but generations of fans wouldn't change a thing.

• ALAMY

> GAEL GARCIA BERNAL IS THE NEW ZORRO IN Z > ANDRE THE GIANT BIOPIC PLANNED

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8-10 JUNE
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THE UNVEILED TREASURES IN THE YEAR OF THE EXTRAORDINARY JUBILEE
ST. PETER'S AND THE PAPAL BASILICAS OF ROME 3D
JUNE 18/19/20/23

THE FAST **BOYSCOUTS** + **Tango & Cash**
RETRO SUN JUNE 26 AT 6PM • ALL TIX \$17

ON STAGE **SIMON TEDESCHI**
WITH SPECIAL GUEST SSO VIOLINIST ROGER BENEDICT
Romantic Classics
THEN ON SCREEN NOEL COWARD'S **BRIEF ENCOUNTER**
SUN JUNE 26

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14 CLASSIC FILMS BACK ON THE BIG SCREEN IN RESTORED DIGITAL

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THE 1981 MOVIE THAT STINKS IN ALL THE RIGHT WAYS!!
Odorama!
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Polyester.
Starring Divine • Tab Hunter

SCI-FI CLASSIC DUO ON THE BIG SCREEN!
FORBIDDEN PLANET + **2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY**
SUN JULY 17

JOHN CARPENTER DOUBLE FEATURE!
ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK + **THEY LIVE**
RETRO FRI JULY 22 AT 7PM ALL TICKETS \$17

BIG BAND CONCERT MELL-O-TONES
SPECIAL GUEST NEIL JENSEN AT THE WURLITZER
CLASSIC SONGS FROM THE 1920'S TO THE 1940'S
PLUS! SUSAN HAYWARD AS SINGER JANE FROMAN IN **WITH A SONG IN MY HEART**
SUN JUL 31 AT 1PM

50TH ANNIVERSARY 4K REMASTER!
GOOD, BAD & UGLY
RETRO SUN AUG 7 AT 7PM NORMAL PRICES APPLY

SCHWARZENEGGER DOUBLE FEATURE:
COMMANDO + **PREDATOR**
RETRO FRI AUGUST 12 AT 7PM ALL TICKETS \$17

BLUE VELVET
30TH ANNIVERSARY
RETRO FRI AUG 19 AT 9PM ALL TIX \$15

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES
RETRO FRI SEPT 9 AT 9PM ALL TIX \$15 AND INCLUDES A SLICE OF PIZZA!

Monty Python AND THE HOLY GRAIL
"As funny as a movie can get!"
"Inspired lunacy!"
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SPECIAL Q&A SCREENING WITH MARC MCCLURE (JIMMY OLSEN) & SARAH DOUGLAS (URSA)
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Disney Pixar **INSIDE OUT**
WORLD MENTAL HEALTH WEEK SCREENING
SUN OCT 9 & SAT OCT 15
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HALLOWEEN SPECIAL GRINDHOUSE DOUBLE FEATURE
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RETRO SUN NOV 13 AT 6.30PM ALL TICKETS \$17

TOP GUN 30TH ANNIVERSARY + **BEVERLY HILLS COP**
RETRO SUN DEC 4 AT 6.30PM ALL TICKETS \$17

Christmas Special GREMLINS + **LETHAL WEAPON**
RETRO SUN DEC 18 AT 6.30PM ALL TICKETS \$17

InCinemas

EDITED by JAMES JENNINGS

THE EMPIRE MOVIE GUIDE | UNMISSABLE ★★☆☆ EXCELLENT ★★☆☆ GOOD ★★☆☆ POOR ★★☆☆ TRAGIC ★

The Nice Guys

★★★★★

OUT NOW / RATED MA15+ / 116 MINS.

DIRECTOR Shane Black

CAST Russell Crowe, Ryan Gosling, Margaret Qualley, Kim Basinger

PLOT Los Angeles, the 1970s. Washed-up private eye Holland March (Gosling) and hired enforcer Jackson Healy (Crowe) must team up to investigate the case of a missing girl (Qualley) and the connected death of a porn star.

HAVING SQUATTED ON SHANE Black's To Do list for years, it's only now, after he once more hit blistering

form with *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang* and proved able to work within the strictures of the Marvel Cinematic Universe — and make more than a billion for the studio in the process — on *Iron Man 3*, that *The Nice Guys* is out of a drawer and in the world. And thank goodness, because this is a fine addition to his mismatched-buddy-action-comedy canon.

The “buddies” here have less of a love-hate relationship, and more of a loathe-fear one. Ryan Gosling's ex-cop Holland March comes loaded with tragic family baggage and a propensity to become queasy at the sight of blood. Usually his own. Stuck in a sizzled rut, his hold on morals is, at best, tentative, with only his daughter (Angourie Rice, smart-mouthed and wise) keeping him the right side of criminal.





Russell's sneeze-shield was too late to contain Ryan's allergies.

Then there's Russell Crowe's Jackson Healy, a man frustrated by the way the world is spiralling out of control and struggling mightily to improve himself to find his place in it. He's got his own battle with the bottle, can't maintain a relationship with anything more than his pet fish and prefers to use force instead of words.

These are two men who should absolutely not spend time in each other's company, but are drawn together when Margaret Qualley's flighty Amelia asks Healy to warn off whoever is trying to dig out information about her. It turns out that person is in fact March, interested in how Amelia fits into the suspicious death of porn star Misty Mountains (Murielle Telio). Dragged into each other's orbit, they're soon unravelling a much bigger case when Amelia goes missing.

This pairing proves hilarious — Crowe is gruffly funny, while Gosling channels Buster Keaton-style physical comedy, best evidenced by a great stand-off involving a toilet stall. Yet amid all the madness, there's real feeling pulsing inside both the leads — they're damaged characters, but they don't necessarily wind up smoothing out their rough edges.

They could be a metaphor for the movie itself. Because though there's a healthy vein of absurdity at its core, Black doesn't skip on its hard-bitten noir aspects, channelling such classics as *L.A. Confidential* (not too tough when you have Crowe and Kim Basinger swapping dialogue) and throwing in the requisite amount of toughs, thugs, femme fatales, conspiracies and criminal damage. But there's depth, too, with the

director meditating on America's evolution through the '70s and the search for truth, amidst the uncovering of conspiracies, after the manic optimism of the '60s. If it sometimes feels like it's bitten off more than it can chew, with the plot a touch tangled, it doesn't affect the entertainment value by much as, thanks to a sharp script co-written with Anthony Bagarozzi, everything blends without leaving a sour taste. *The Nice Guys* will make you wish Shane Black made more movies, but feel grateful for the ones we have.

JAMES WHITE

VERDICT Quick on its wits and fast with its fists, this is *Black* firmly back doing what he does best. And nobody out there does it better.



Money Monster

★★★★★

OUT JUNE 2 / RATED TBC / 98 MINS.

DIRECTOR Jodie Foster

CAST George Clooney, Julia Roberts, Jack O'Connell, Caitriona Balfe, Dominic West

PLOT *Money Monster*, a popular cable finance show, is hijacked during a live broadcast by Kyle Budwell (O'Connell), a man angry at taking a bath on a recommendation by the show's host Lee Gates (Clooney). As a tense hostage situation unfolds, Gates and Budwell begin to dig a little deeper into the truth...

JODIE FOSTER WAS TYPICALLY excellent in Spike Lee's *Inside Man*, but it's clear now she was also taking notes from Lee: watching and learning, for her fourth film as director in a similarly sweaty, tense, entertaining siege thriller. And if it's not quite as accomplished as Lee's movie, or its other key touchstones, *Dog Day Afternoon* and *Network*, it at least gets points for trying to clear some very high bars.

A world away from her previous directorial efforts *Little Man Tate*, *Home For The Holidays* and the blackly comedic *The Beaver*, *Money Monster* is the latest movie with the financial crash of 2008 on its mind. While it's not specifically about that time like *The Big Short* (indeed, it's a present day affair), it's clearly a movie driven by anger about the mendacious money monsters who helped make it happen, or at the very least turned a blind eye while it did.

Chief among those is the film's cartoon villain, Dominic West's unctuous master of the universe. The focus, however, is on Lee Gates (Clooney, who also produces), a Jim Kramer-like host of a cable TV money show. A smug, self-absorbed smirker, Gates is a smart cookie who's long since stopped asking the big questions. We know that he'll have a Damascene conversion during the course of his ordeal on live television, but Clooney — who's very rarely off-screen — nails the modulation perfectly as he realizes how empty his life is.

Although most of his time on screen is shared with O'Connell (effectively intense, if not quite as sympathetic as the obvious model for his character, Al Pacino's *Dog Day Afternoon* character, Sonny), he also has an interesting relationship with Julia Roberts, as his long-suffering director, in which they rekindle some of that old *Ocean's Eleven* chemistry despite communicating mostly via earpiece.

Ultimately, *Money Monster* has little new to say — greed, as it turns out, is not good, and selfish TV show hosts should learn to cherish the little things in life — and as it skips around from drama to thriller to media satire and back again, it can be a little overstuffed. But when Clooney's this watchable, and the results are this much fun, interest rates are sure to rise. **CHRIS HEWITT**

VERDICT Fast-paced, enjoyable, if somewhat on the nose mélange of thriller, satire, and drama, this is Foster's best movie as a director. And we'd happily watch any TV show George Clooney wants to host.

Bernie Sanders's choice of running mate sent mixed messages.



BONUS FEATURE

NEW JACK CITY

JACK O'CONNELL TALKS CLOONEY, FOSTER AND WORKING IN NEW YORK FOR THE FIRST TIME...

What attracted you to the role?

I like [the character of] Kyle, I feel like his reasons are justified. It's certainly very extreme what he does, but I like him. He's a family man, he's working hard, he's got a youngster on the way, and the system's screwed him over so he takes action.

Can you talk a little bit about working with Jodie Foster as director?

Yeah, she was great. I felt like I had a bit of a leash but she never let me go out of character on set, and that was key. So, she definitely led it, and the way she's told everyone's story is quite amazing. I'm really impressed with her.

It must have been an amazing experience filming in New York.

I'd never worked in the States at all before then, so that was cool. It was very surreal to be in the middle of the financial district in New York with George Clooney wearing a bomb vest that I had allegedly fashioned. And a whole section of the NYPD out in force to keep an eye on me.

What's Mr. Clooney like to work with? He's renowned to be a joker on set but also very serious in terms of getting the job done.

That's a fair description. I had a lot of good fun with him but I feel like we put a lot of good work in as well. I didn't realise from the early readings of the script how much the characters take in the film.

As a young British actor, was shooting a film in NYC with George Clooney and Julia Roberts where you saw your career going?

Frankly, yes. I guess I had that ambition within me. I could do whatever I wanted to do and I love doing low budget films, and I would still be more than happy making low budget films for the right scripts and the right people. So all of that I considered my training. I didn't train at a drama school, I trained at work and thankfully I was allowed to make the decisions that were going to help me out there. So yeah, frankly, I had every intention of one day making a film with George Clooney and Julia Roberts. I just couldn't be so definite about it. **DAVID MICHAEL BROWN**



Everybody Wants Some!!



OUT JUNE 23 / RATED MA15+ / 117 MINS.

DIRECTOR Richard Linklater

CAST Blake Jenner, Glen Powell, Tyler Hoechlin, Zoey Deutch, Temple Baker

PLOT August, 1980. Baseball pitcher Jake (Blake Jenner) arrives at his Texan college and spends the few days before classes begin bonding with his new teammates.

THERE ARE ONLY TWO RULES

for the college baseball players in Richard Linklater's "spiritual sequel" to *Dazed And Confused*. One: no alcohol in their houses. Two: no girls in the upstairs bedrooms. It doesn't take long for both to be broken. And broken in style.

Starting three days and 15 hours before class starts (as a handy onscreen subtitle tells us) at the fictional Southeast Texas State college, *Everybody Wants Some!!* (named after a Van Halen song, including the double exclamation marks) follows freshman Jake as he moves into

the team houses, meets his teammates and attempts to settle into college life. And the best way to do this? Before he can even unpack, three of the returning players take him and another freshman out drinking. It's time for some good ol' mate bonding.

His introduction to his team and housemates serves as ours and it's handled expertly — no one fades into the ensemble. Finn (Powell) is a charismatic ladies man, Willoughby (Wyatt Russell) is a laidback stoner, Plummer (Tanner Kalina) is an enthusiastic but slightly dim freshman. We'll stop at three, but could easily continue.

Post this first drinking session, not much changes — the group go out to the local disco, host a raucous house party, then spend the next day hanging around until it's time to go out again. It should be clear by now that, as with its (spiritual) predecessor, intricate plotting isn't high on Linklater's agenda. Instead the film focuses on the characters, and camaraderie within the group as everyone jostles for position. Although that hierarchy is ever-changing, as Finn tells Jake as he's been the victim of one particular prank: "We all take turns being chumps around here. You accept your chumpification, you wear it well and you pass it on."

Where this deviates from the *Dazed And Confused* formula, is with the gender makeup of the group Linklater chooses to focus on: 12 characters, all guys. The women in the film are peripheral — potential conquests who either respond to the groups' advances, or put them solidly in their place. It's not that they're portrayed poorly, just that it's not their story. The one we do spend extended time with is Beverly (Deutch), Jake's love interest, but only when the two of them are together.

To criticise this purely based on its male to female ratio would be akin to complaining *Sex And The City* spent too much time with the women and not enough episodes trying to see everything from Aiden's perspective, but it does affect the tone — you're effectively hanging out with 12 college-aged guys for two hours. On the surface, this could sound like a turn-off, but amid all the testosterone-fuelled bluster and (often misplaced) bravado are sweetly funny moments where the film finds its heart. And by the time the first class of the year starts and the credits roll, you'll wish your time with them wasn't so fleeting. **JONATHAN PILE**

VERDICT A perfectly-pitched blast of nostalgia with a smart, honest script and an expertly compiled soundtrack.

Budget cuts really hit the Alabama Coast Guard.

Fassbender pulled the Victa's
starter cord waaaaay too hard.





InCinemas

X-Men: Apocalypse

★★★☆☆

OUT NOW / RATED MA15+ / 144 MINS.

DIRECTOR Bryan Singer

CAST James McAvoy, Michael Fassbender, Jennifer Lawrence, Oscar Isaac, Nicholas Hoult, Kodi Smit-McPhee, Sophie Turner, Olivia Munn

PLOT When ancient uber-mutant Apocalypse (Oscar Isaac) is woken after sleeping for millennia, he examines 1983 civilisation and finds it wanting, so he decides to bring down the world. Professor Xavier (James McAvoy) and his students must find a way to stop him.

BEFORE APOCALYPSE GETS GOING

bringing about, well, the apocalypse, students from Xavier's School For The Gifted sneak out to see *Return Of The Jedi*. "Well, at least we can all agree, the third one is always the worst," says Sophie Turner's Jean Grey afterwards, with startling prescience. But whether it's a dig at Brett Ratner's unlamented *The Last Stand* or a self-deprecating assessment of this lacklustre second sequel to *First Class* isn't clear — like much of the storytelling here.

The early scenes are promising, with a structure that nods back — the first of many callbacks — to director Bryan Singer's first *X-Men*. This too opens with a flashback to historical mutant activity, followed by a teen developing traumatic abilities and a cage fight that leads to a mass brawl. But there's an immense number of existing characters to assemble and new characters to introduce, so for the rest of the first hour we're passed from one person to another at a zippy pace. Newcomers Cyclops (Tye Sheridan) and Nightcrawler (Kodi Smit-McPhee) are immediately charming, while Nicholas Hoult and James McAvoy slip seamlessly back into their roles, although the former has little to actually work with — a perennial danger in a film with such a huge and talented cast, and such enormous ambitions.

Inevitably, not every character fares as well. Evan Peters's Quicksilver, so effective in *Days Of Future Past*, attempts to recapture the same unicorn and just seems stuck in time, not helped by some baffling choices that hamstring his character's arc. Turner's Grey often comes across as unpleasant rather than insecure, »



while Jennifer Lawrence makes Mystique more unrelentingly grim than ever. This sombre freedom fighter lacks the slightest resemblance to Rebecca Romijn's kinky, sardonic killer or even Lawrence's own ballsy *First Class* performance. She's just Katniss with superpowers — which is a shame, because the movie could have used a little more kink, and a little less inspirational speechmaking.

But the big problems lie with the bad guys, Apocalypse and his Four Horsemen. Alexandra Shipp's Storm gets far too little to do given how well she does it, Ben Hardy's Angel makes no impact at all and Olivia Munn, as Psylocke, is ferocious but entirely without nuance. When we rejoin Michael Fassbender's Magneto, he's retired from plotting against humanity and lives in a rural idyll where he raises extraordinarily fluffy chickens with his lovely wife and daughter. You can have three guesses what hackneyed development might lead him back to evil-doing. But you'll only need one.

But the worst on a number of levels is En Sabah Nur, or Apocalypse. He is an ancient and powerful mutant who can hop from one body to another, picking up fresh powers as he goes — which may explain why his abilities remain extraordinarily undefined. An opening lifted straight from *Stargate* sees the already-ancient being transferred into the body of a young Egyptian who looks just like Oscar Isaac, but only for a moment. Soon he's slathered with prosthetics, with a character design that even Thanos would reject as unattractive. Isaac does his best to give some weight to proceedings and occasionally succeeds, but Apocalypse's precise beef with the 20th century remains unclear, and any

ultimate goal beyond “power and punishment” rather nebulous. We're told that his great ability is to persuade mutants to his side, but even taking into account the damaged nature of those he targets, his arguments seem weak.

There are huge nits to pick elsewhere. Like *Jurassic World* last year, ultimate responsibility for releasing this titan actually lies with one of our heroes, although no-one ever acknowledges it. And the appalling climax of the film, when whole cities are blasted to swirling, bloodless CG dust and their populations apparently vaporised, results in the death of millions of people who don't warrant so much as a momentary look of horror. In a film that makes a point of recalling the Holocaust, that shows spectacularly bad taste.

Compared to the energetic, bold *Days Of Future Past*, it all seems so leaden. How many times can Professor Xavier remind us that there is good in Magneto — by now a mass-murderer several times over — before one of them pulls a lightsaber? How many overly familiar exhortations to heroism can Mystique really deliver and expect to be taken seriously? And did they need to replay entire scenes we've seen multiple times before? Aside from a few moments with *Nightcrawler* — in his achingly perfect *Thriller* jacket and Flock Of Seagulls hair — there's no levity here, no tonal variation. The more the film harks back to other X-instants, the more you'll wish you were watching those instead. **HELEN O'HARA**

VERDICT Messier and heavier than *Days Of Future Past*, it's not so much the next step in the X-Men's evolution as a failed callback to past glories.

The funhouse mirror made Evan Peters feel oh so pretty.



BONUS FEATURE

KIND OF BLUE

OSCAR ISAAC EXPLAINS TRYING TO END THE WORLD WHILE WEARING HEELS

That's quite the costume you're wearing as Apocalypse.

Yeah, the suit was about 20 kilos. I had to have a cooling mechanism underneath because if not I would get heatstroke and die [laughs]. I had to have a cooling tent and I couldn't really sit down on a normal chair, so they would put me on a little saddle and I was in high heels as well, so to practice for it I put on my girlfriend's high heels at home [laughs] — just so I could look manly with them, you know — but it was very difficult. It was painful. I couldn't really interact with anybody else because my whole head was encased in prosthetics, and I would be sweating into my ears but I couldn't scratch them, so I just had to sit and meditate [laughs]. I wouldn't really talk to anyone because I couldn't really see them, you know, and so it became a process of how to express things with very limited mobility. I actually watched a lot of kabuki. I mean, it was fun but it was — I wouldn't want to do it again [laughs].

If you were given the power to go inside someone's brain and suck in that energy, who would you choose?

Whose knowledge would I want to suck? That's an interesting one because, yeah, he gets their powers as well, right. I don't know. I don't know. That's a good question. I mean, you know, peace is a wonderful thing so peace of mind so you'd think, you know, an easy one is the Dalai Lama. He seems very, you know, kind of — he's got a level of equanimity.

First you're in *Star Wars*, now *X-Men*... one wonders if you're a bit of a geek.

I feel like after this no-one's going to wonder. They'll know that I'm a geek.

How much of geek were you as a child?

When I was a kid I collected *X-Factor* and I really loved *Apocalypse* and the *X-Men* and *Star Wars* as well, so when I was asked if I wanted to be a part of them, you know, I would have betrayed my younger self by saying no. I know that if I could look back to younger Oscar, he'd be very happy that I said yes to these movies.

MICHELE MANELIS



Alice Through The Looking Glass



OUT NOW / RATED TBC / 108 MINS.

DIRECTOR James Bobin

CAST Mia Wasikowska, Johnny Depp, Helena Bonham Carter, Sacha Baron Cohen, Anne Hathaway

PLOT *Alice (Wasikowska) returns to Underland to find a gravely ill Mad Hatter (Depp) and sets off to solve the mystery of his past after stealing a time-hopping device from Time (Baron Cohen).*

DESPITE MAKING A STAGGERING

\$1 billion-plus at the international box office, it's safe to say that, six years on from release, Tim Burton's take on *Alice In Wonderland* isn't a particularly beloved take on Lewis Carroll's classic children's book. But with that kind of cash haul, a sequel was coming whether it was a good idea or not. *Alice Through The Looking Glass* — which bears little resemblance to the source material — is resolutely not.

Those hoping that director James Bobin (*The Muppets*, *Flight Of The Conchords*) brings his mirthful humour and lightness of touch to proceedings are

in for a deflating disappointment: *Looking Glass* is a grim, joyless slog that sucks any of the imagination out of Carroll's works and spews them back onto the screen in a sickly torrent of garish CGI, misfired jokes and dour storytelling that rejects all notions of fun in the way that a human body would reject a pig heart during an ill-advised organ transplant.

The nonsensical plot, which fails to hold up to even minor scrutiny, involves Alice (Wasikowska, giving it a red hot go despite the trainwreck going on around her) trying to save The Mad Hatter (Depp, forever finding new sharks to jump) who's dying because he thinks his long-lost family are dead (or something). The illogical solution seems to be stealing a CGI whatsit from Time (Baron Cohen doing a wobbly Borat-esque accent) so she can travel back in time to figure out what happened to the Hatter's family (or something). Never mind that she may destroy everything in existence by doing so — no, she'll brazenly risk it all for the sad Hatter. Cue dull, pointless back stories and time you'll never get back.

ADAM THOMPSON

VERDICT Like 1985's *Return To Oz*, this is an unnecessarily dark sequel that completely forgoes the fun and frivolity of the source material. It'll still make money on brand name alone — just hope it's not enough to encourage a third chapter.

Hatters gonna hat, hat, hat, hat. Shake it off.



BONUS FEATURE

TRULY, MADLY, DEPPLY

MIA WASIKOWSKA TALKS JOHNNY DEPP AND AN R-RATED *LOOKING GLASS*...

The first *Alice* made all the money. Is there more pressure for this to be a success now?

I guess so but it really doesn't make much of a difference to me — I'd do [*the film*] anyway. Of course I hope it'll do well, but after I finish filming there's nothing [*to worry about*]... There probably is [*more pressure in general*], only in the sense that you're more visible in public for like three months.

Are you recognised in public more now?

Maybe. I think that'll happen for a few weeks and then fade away in a similar way when the first one came out. I felt a little bit recognised in America, but not here, and it then kind of goes away in a few weeks. I still feel fairly anonymous, which is nice.

Is it hard to keep a straight face working opposite Johnny Depp when he basically looks like a walking LSD trip?

I think I've become quite desensitised to that because everybody in that film looks, you know, quite unnatural. But I probably feel more comfortable talking to Johnny when he's like that... I forget that he's underneath that. I know in the first film he came on set once to do off-camera stuff as himself and it was just the most terrifying thing of my life, but as The Mad Hatter he's perfectly comfortable to chat with.

How was it working with Sacha Baron Cohen?

Yeah, good. James [*Bobin, director*] puts it best when he says he [*Baron Cohen*] plays the confident idiot really well. Because he definitely does and he plays such a ridiculous character in this. The dynamic between him and Alice is really cute and she's the only one who pulls him up on his idiocy and that was really nice to have that. And he's so funny and improvises a lot so that was quite fun. I liked the scenes with him.

James co-created Bruno, Borat and Ali G with Sacha, so they obviously go back a long way. Was there a lot of clowning around on set?

They kept it so professional considering how they have such a long history. But James had to keep him in line because he strays into very not-PG territory, so James had to really keep it 'Disney', which was a challenge!

So there could be an R-rated cut?

There definitely could be very easily, of just his scenes. **JAMES JENNINGS**

Miles Ahead

★★★★★

OUT JUNE 16 / RATED M / 100 MINS.

DIRECTOR Don Cheadle

CAST Don Cheadle, Ewan McGregor, Emayatzy Corinealdi, Michael Stuhlbarg,

PLOT After reclusive jazz-trumpet legend Miles Davis (Don Cheadle) is doorstepped by dodgy music journalist Dave Braden (Ewan McGregor), the pair form an unlikely alliance to retrieve a stolen music tape..

EYES HIDDEN BEHIND HUGE

sunglasses, his hair wild and long, voice modulated into a rich, husky whisper, Don Cheadle announces in *Miles Ahead* that “when you’re creating your own shit, man... the sky is the limit.” And, with this passion project — Cheadle directs for the first time, co-writes (with Steven Baigelman), produces and stars as Miles Davis — he’s certainly aimed to push the limits of the biopic.

The hub of the plot is a fictional crime caper set on the streets of late-’70s Manhattan. Cheadle’s Davis is frazzled, coke-addicted and apparently creatively spent. It’s an engaging portrayal, enlarging this already larger-than-life figure into someone who’ll sock a journalist (McGregor) in the face for using the phrase “comeback piece” before dragging them along on a gun-toting quest to retrieve a stolen tape of unreleased recordings (Michael Stuhlbarg going full sleaze as the light-fingered record executive).

Interestingly, this is all framed by an apparently unconnected TV interview with Cheadle-as-Davis, the events kicking off as he puts his trumpet to his



lips, and concluding as he pulls it away. So the suggestion is he’s ‘playing’ the entire film: his music being the ideal delivery method for his myth. It’s a bold and effective device, and the kind of thing you’d expect from a script from Baigelman, given he’d already played with the format in the non-linear, James Brown biopic *Get On Up*.

The problem comes when the film segues into flashbacks which depict Davis at his peak two decades earlier and chart his rocky relationship with dancer Frances Taylor (Emayatzy Corinealdi). Presented as ’70s Miles blearily looking back on what went wrong with his life, this introduces biopic-by-numbers

material and gives Corinealdi little to grapple with beyond the usual wronged-woman clichés. It feels like a token attempt to tell a bigger, more traditional story, taking us on too many dull diversions from an otherwise entertainingly crazed look at a music legend. Cheadle should have fully heeded his own character’s counsel: “Come with some attitude, man. Don’t get all corny with this shit.”

DAN JOLIN

VERDICT A largely inventive and energetic portrayal of a past-their-prime music legend that’s let down by its unnecessary trad biopic beats.

In the alternate universe, *Pulp Fiction* was still awesome.

ALSO
OUT

Highly Strung

★★★★★

OUT NOW / RATED M / 103 MINS.

DIRECTOR Scott Hicks

CAST Kristian Winther, Ioana Tache

Award-winning director Scott Hicks continues his love affair with music in this documentary that looks at how stringed instruments strike a chord with aficionados. Sadly many of the well-orchestrated movements go nowhere and the piece never reaches a crescendo. One for music lovers only. **ELIZABETH BEST**

The Measure Of A Man

★★★★★

OUT JUNE 2 / RATED TBC / 93 MINS.

DIRECTOR Stéphane Brizé

CAST Vincent Lindon, Karine de Mirbeck, Matthieu Schaller, Catherine Saint-Bonnet

Filed in relentlessly long slice-of-life takes with a non-professional cast, Vincent Lindon exudes downtrodden decency in this laudably unmelodramatic study of the soul-destroying struggle to find work in recessionary France. **PP**

God Willing

★★★★★

OUT JUNE 2 / RATED PG / 84 MINS.

DIRECTOR Edoardo Gatta

CAST Marco Giallini, Alessandro Gassman, Laura Morante

Refreshing take on the “atheist vs. Christian” loggerhead, as an assured naysayer (Giallini) tries to upstage a rad priest (Gassman). Meanders and wanes after a strong start but this dramatic farce is surprisingly compelling as it presents faith lived out. **BEN MCEACHEN**



Hunt For The Wilderpeople



OUT NOW / RATED PG / 101 MINS.

DIRECTOR Taika Waititi

CAST Sam Neill, Julian Dennison, Rachel House, Rima Te Wiata, Rhys Darby

PLOT In the wild New Zealand bush, foster kid/gangsta-wannabe Ricky Baker (Dennison) escapes child services and a stint in juvie by hiding from authorities with his foster "uncle", Hector (Neill).

IN CASE YOU HAVEN'T HEARD, Taika Waititi is directing *Thor 3*. For those familiar with the Kiwi's CV, which boasts a series of charming and critically successful indie comedies, a superhero blockbuster is a hard left turn. With *Eagle vs Shark*, *Boy* and vampire mock-doc *What We Do In The Shadows*, Waititi has made a name for himself with a whimsical, sweet-natured humour, his films always striking the right balance of humour and heart. *Wilderpeople* follows suit and joins his repertoire of NZ-based films that are much like the country itself: quirky, free-spirited and endearingly understated.

Ricky Baker — the parentless, chubby, misbehaving teen protagonist of *Wilderpeople* — has been passed around foster families his entire life. Most screenwriters would turn this foundation into something grim, but Waititi flips Ricky's sob story on its head and moulds

it into a light-hearted romp that's equal parts coming-of-age tale and road adventure. Based on Barry Crump's book *Wild Pork And Watercress*, the film follows Ricky first into his new foster home, and then into the relentless NZ bush, where he and his gruff foster uncle Hec gradually develop a unique bond. Between trippy hunger-induced visions of talking hamburgers, take-downs of dim-witted bushmen and a wild pig attack, the unlikely duo's adventure is undoubtedly wacky, but bares enough pathos to keep the story motivated and the audience on-board.

Waititi didn't audition anyone for the role of Ricky, instead handing it off to newcomer Julian Dennison. His instincts were right, as Dennison seems born to play the affable miscreant. He nails the youthful naivety, sass, and hubris that make Ricky so endlessly entertaining, but maintains a milder soft side in his performance, giving his character a vulnerability (masked by scrappy hip-hop hoodies) that shines through when he recites haiku poetry, or stands up for his new father-figure friend.

Wilderpeople demonstrates Waititi's impressively consistent handle on his film, with an engaging script and plenty of stylistic techniques that only amplify an endearing tone that harkens back to classic '80s adventure-comedies. With heart, soul, and wit, *Wilderpeople* is sure to win over even the grumpiest bushman.

JOHANNA GRUBER

VERDICT: Imaginative style and winning characters make this heart-warming (and momentarily heart-wrenching) flick a must-see. Just try to get the "Ricky Baker" song out of your head.

Even at family gatherings, Neill kept one eye out for velociraptors.

BONUS FEATURE

WILDER-HELMER

DIRECTOR TAIKA WAITITI ON THE JOY OF BIG CAR CHASES AND KIWIS VISITING ASGARD

Where did you find Julian Dennison? He's great!

He'd been in two films before this — *Shopping*, this small New Zealand film, then a film that did really well in Aussie called *Paper Planes*. I worked with him on a commercial, and he was really funny, and I guess I just discovered then how good he was to work with.

The "Ricky Baker" song is incredible, and such an earworm. Who came up with it?

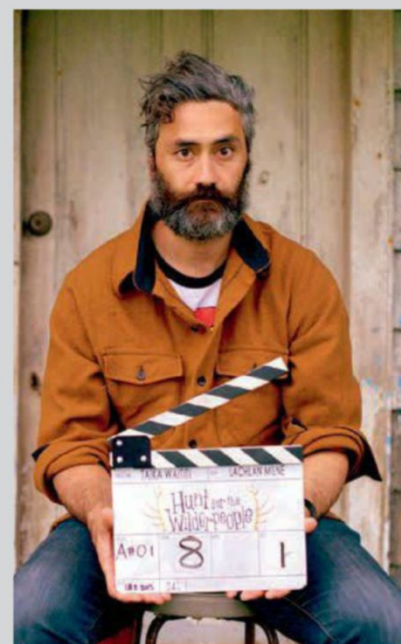
That was a collective effort. In that scene we were singing *Happy Birthday*, then one of the producers came in and said "Sorry, I just realised that *Happy Birthday* isn't out of copyright yet." I had my little Casio keyboard on set, and basically we just got Rima, who plays Bella, to come up with some chords, then we all pitched in lyrics, and just cobbled it together at the last minute. It was a great thing to stumble upon, because I feel like it's a lot better than *Happy Birthday*.

Was it fun doing the big car chase at the climax?

Totally. I took a lot of inspiration from those '80s films, just things like *Blues Brothers*, like if you have the chance to flip a police car over, you just have to do it. I wrote that in: 'A police car flies in the air for no reason at all'.

Will you chuck some NZ references into *Thor 3*?

I might try and sneak some New Zealanders in. There's a couple of people I always use in my films, and if I can I'll find a small part for them, just to satisfy this weird thing that I have where I want to keep that pattern going. **JAMES JENNINGS**



InCinemas



The Meddler

★★★★★

OUT NOW / RATED M / 100 MINS.

DIRECTOR Lorene Scafaria

CAST Susan Sarandon, Rose Byrne, J.K. Simmons

With a premise teetering on sugary overload, *Seeking A Friend For The End Of The World* director Lorene Scafaria's *The Meddler* elevates itself to a warm cuddle of a rom-com thanks to winning performances from its leads. Susan Sarandon is wonderful as the widow trying to escape her new life in L.A. by constantly interfering with her child's life. Rose Byrne is suitably exasperated as her put upon daughter and J.K. Simmons delights as the biker ex-cop with a heart of gold. It's certainly predictable and infuriating at times, but the heart is genuinely warmed. **DAVID MICHAEL BROWN**



Criminal

★★★★★

OUT NOW / RATED MA15+ / 113 MINS.

DIRECTOR Ariel Vromen

CAST Kevin Costner, Ryan Reynolds

You've heard of *Face/Off*. Well, this is *Brain/Off*. Where once John Travolta took on Nicolas Cage's face, here, Kevin Costner takes on Ryan Reynolds's mind. The result, alas, is less charmingly absurd than that promises. This sort of high-concept sci-fi tends to go in two directions: either you take the John Woo route, and go riotously silly; or go the Philip K. Dick route, and sketch out a clearly defined world, exploring the social and political ramifications of the premise. As hinted at by the bland title, *Criminal* chooses neither: opting instead for a boring procedural template that skips over the 'sci' part of the sci-fi. **JN**



Remember

★★★★★

OUT NOW / RATED MA15+ / 94 MINS.

DIRECTOR Atom Egoyan

CAST Christopher Plummer, Martin Landau, Dean Norris, Jürgen Prochnow, Henry Czerny

PLOT Two Holocaust survivors living in the same nursing home plan to find and take revenge on a surviving Nazi officer before it's too late.

FIRST OF ALL, THE BEST WAY YOU could watch this movie is without knowing anything about it. If you're willing to take our recommendation, stop reading this now and just take our word: this is a brilliant slow-burn drama that is not nearly as depressing as it looks from the first glance. Still reading? Don't worry, we'll try not to drop spoilers on you.

Christopher Plummer (looking all of his 86 years, plus a couple more for good luck) is Zev Guttman, a Holocaust survivor battling dementia, and — along with fellow nursing home resident Max (Martin Landau) — haunted by memories of Auschwitz. Max has devised a plan for Zev to exact revenge on a surviving Nazi SS commander.

Because Zev's failing mind can't

remember anything for long, director Atom Egoyan drip-feeds information to the viewer so we are in a similar fog to Zev — a sort of *Memento*-for-old-people. Although it's not really a thriller, there are bursts of intensity and violence, and a slowly tightening noose of tension, that build to an astonishing climax.

Plummer's portrayal of dementia — a man trying to hold onto his memories and his dignity as he's betrayed by his own body — is glorious and harrowing in its subtlety. Zev is adept at faking it, putting on a façade of competence when, at times, he just has no idea what's happening around him; but then we see him stumbling around in the dark, calling out for people long gone. Egoyan mines the empathy that Plummer finds in the role, to create a couple of small moments that call out the way we treat the old: in a scene where Zev is holding up a queue, he turns to see a middle-aged woman barely containing her impatience — her glare burning straight down the barrel of the camera, into us. Plummer silently captures the guilt and embarrassment of the moment, even as we're keenly aware that no-one could be as frustrated by Zev's fumbblings as himself. But there's a steel will behind the slow-moving exterior — much like the movie itself. **TIM KEEN**

VERDICT A gripping drama, sad but never maudlin, anchored by a terrific turn from Christopher Plummer.

"Wait, this isn't about *Minecraft*..."



Mr. Right

★☆☆☆☆

OUT JUNE 16 / RATED MA15+ / 90 MINS.

DIRECTOR Paco Cabezas

CAST Anna Kendrick, Sam Rockwell, Tim Roth, James Ranson, Anson Mount, RZA

PLOT After the end of a relationship, Martha's (Kendrick) manic behaviour leads her to meeting an equally manic, yet charming and witty ex-hit man (Rockwell), who now only kills those who seek his services.

A MORE APPROPRIATE TITLE FOR *Mr. Right* would have been *The Overcompensating Screenwriter*. Then, at least, one could interpret the film as a brilliant lampooning of writers who insist on signing their name across every line of dialogue.

Unfortunately, no such self-awareness saves this waif of a story that'd blow away if it weren't stuck on film. Perhaps writer Max Landis was desperate to join the *Girls* writers' room before the show finishes its course, as he's written an hour-and-a-half of tiresome banter without imbuing a single exchange with genuine emotion. Francis (Rockwell) and Martha (Kendrick) are

consumed with their own cleverness — too busy firing out sarcastic or self-congratulatory one-liners to enter the realm of real human connection.

Landis's insistence on proving his wit doesn't merely obstruct character development; it slowly raises its middle finger to the necessity of a plot. It's a rom-com with no anticipation, a B-grade action fizzler replete with cartoonish villains and sporadic throwbacks to *The Matrix*, and possibly the lowest-stakes film with a body-count ever put to screen.

Which would all be fine if it felt like an intentionally silly comedy, but the film's tone orders us to care about these characters and take their situations seriously.

A silver lining to this fluff comes from the cast. We all want Sam Rockwell to headline more features, and while it's a shame this is one of them, his take on the kooky hitman is fun and memorable, even if he isn't given anywhere to go. Similarly, Kendrick revels in taking her PG persona to a freer and more twisted place. The two have decent chemistry, and make performance choices that often compensate for the overwritten banter.

VERDICT Apart from Rockwell, Kendrick, Tim Roth and RZA's acting chops, *Mr. Right* is more enjoyable if you feel like laughing at a movie, rather than with one.

Evicted Voldemort moved into the skull of Quirrell's niece.



Me Before You

★★★☆☆

OUT JUNE 16 / RATED PG / 110 MINS.

DIRECTOR Thea Sharrock

CAST Emilia Clarke, Sam Claflin, Jenna Coleman, Charles Dance

Sam Claflin plays a paralysed man who romances the help in this weepie based on Jojo Moyes's novel. After an accident, Will (Claflin) becomes reclusive and gruff, especially with the staff hired by his parents. The latest is former waitress Louisa (Emilia Clarke), whose perky traits irritate Will — initially, at least. Unfortunately, Louisa is likely to irritate audiences too: she's a caricatured Bridget Jones pretender whose pratfalling sits oddly with the story's mawkish tone. Claflin is good and the ending packs a punch, but in all it's an awkward mix of melodrama and attempted broad comedy. **ALS**



The Angry Birds Movie

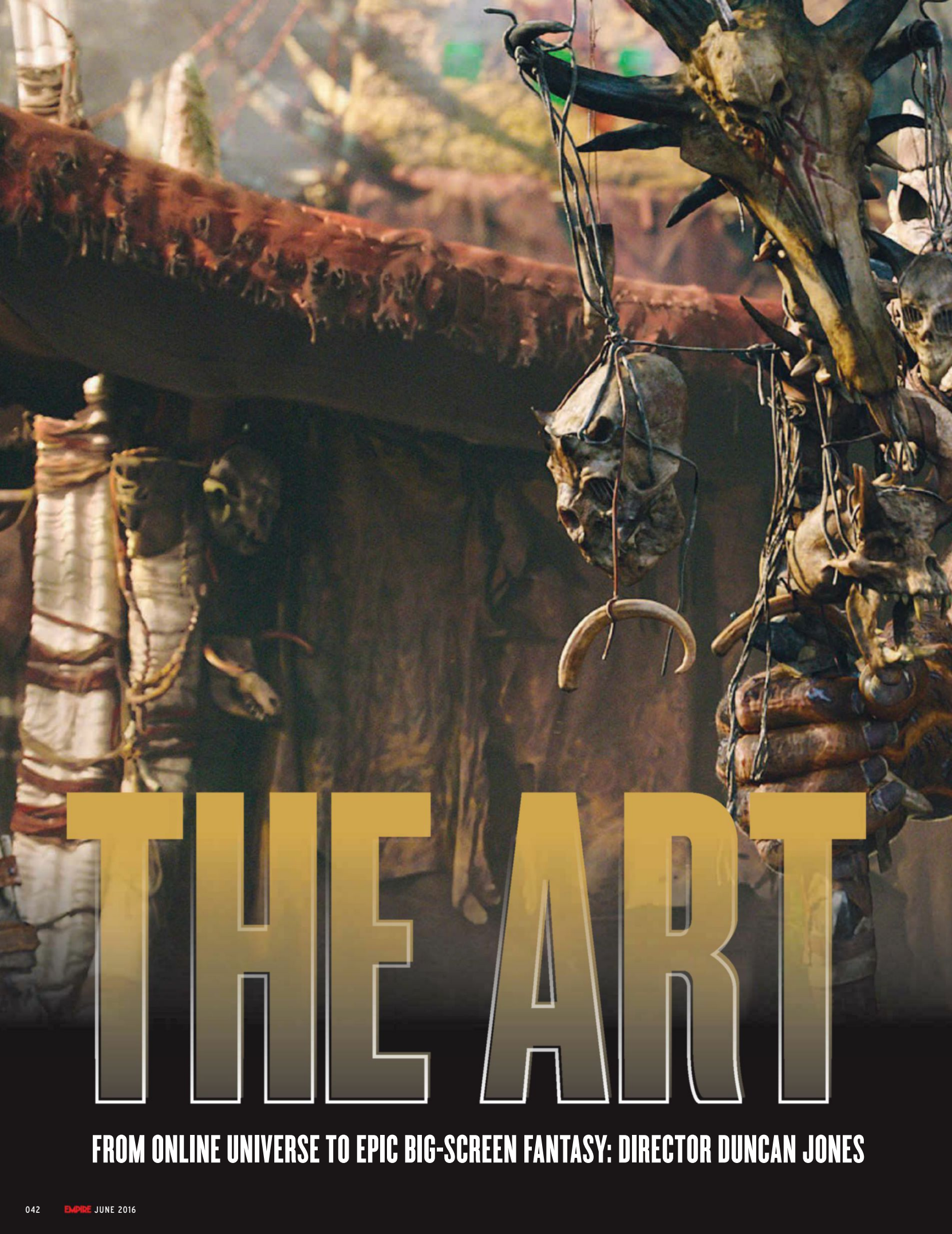
★★★☆☆

OUT NOW / RATED PG / 97 MINS.

DIRECTORS Clay Katis, Fergal Reilly

CAST Jason Sudeikis, Danny McBride

The Lego Movie proved that you could turn a potentially cynical cash-grab into something with genuine craft. *The Angry Birds Movie* just proves that sometimes it's easier to make a cynical cash-grab. The transition from phone to cinema feels retrofitted and clumsy. For starters, our Angry Birds aren't all that angry; it's only our star Red (Sudeikis, on decent form but miscast) who has much of a temper. It all feels driven by marketing, not character. Of course, this matters not at all to the preschoolers who will lap it up: the pigs have more than a whiff of Minions about them. But for adults, it's hard not to be cynical. **JOHN NUGENT**



THE ART

FROM ONLINE UNIVERSE TO EPIC BIG-SCREEN FANTASY: DIRECTOR DUNCAN JONES



OF WAR

AND HIS CREW DISCUSS THE TRICKY BUSINESS OF WARCRAFT WORLD-BUILDING

WORDS DAN JOLIN

DUNCAN JONES WAS ALWAYS A WARRIOR.

He'd wear the heaviest armour, strap on a shield and, as he fondly recalls, "just stand out front and whack things". His business partner and producer, Stuart Fenegan, preferred to be a paladin, smiting his foes with holy power. Bill Westenhofer, appropriately enough for an Oscar-winning visual-effects supervisor, was a fireball-hurling mage. And British actor Robert Kazinsky, the most dedicated *Warcraft* of all the cast and crew of *Warcraft*, favoured the runeforged death knight. "I was in the top 10 DPS for my class for three years straight during *Wrath Of The Lich King*," he tells *Empire* proudly.

If that last sentence made complete sense to you, then you are likely as excited about the imminent arrival of Jones's adaptation of Blizzard's 22-year-old computer-gaming property as the five-and-a-half million other subscribers currently enjoying its *World Of Warcraft*. If not, then Jones and his team, including producer Charles Roven, a veteran of adaptations of kids' cartoons (*Scooby-Doo*), TV shows (*Get Smart*) and comic books (*The Dark Knight*), are just as keen to attract you to their ambitious cinematic interpretation. "You have to make sure you appeal to some people who don't know anything about the game," notes Roven.

This is a great deal more than a straightforward video-game adaptation. *World Of Warcraft* is an evolving online universe whose core location, Azeroth, is deeply familiar to the numerous players (peaking in 2010 at 12 million) who have each spent hour upon hour exploring its exotic, out-sized environments, soaking up its detailed lore, encountering its greatest heroes and villains and even, at one point, experiencing a full-on, worldwide cataclysm. It is a culturally pervasive phenomenon that has engendered fierce loyalty from those it's hooked. When we met on set in April 2014, Kazinsky admitted to clocking around 480 *days* of playtime in Azeroth since its launch in 2004, though that's not abnormal for a committed player; some devotees claim to have logged more than 1,000.



In the human lands of Azeroth: Anduin Lothar (Travis Fimmel) and half-orc Garona (Paula Patton).

As Fenegan says, "*Warcraft* isn't a game in which you have a character that you follow through a linear story. It's a *world*, where you're playing as a character you've created yourself, that you've chosen to become a part of and invest your life in."

And that goes for the *Warcraft* movie-makers, too — at least in terms of life-investment. The translation from online to big screen was a process, at times painful, that would take an entire decade to complete.

LORE AND CHAOS

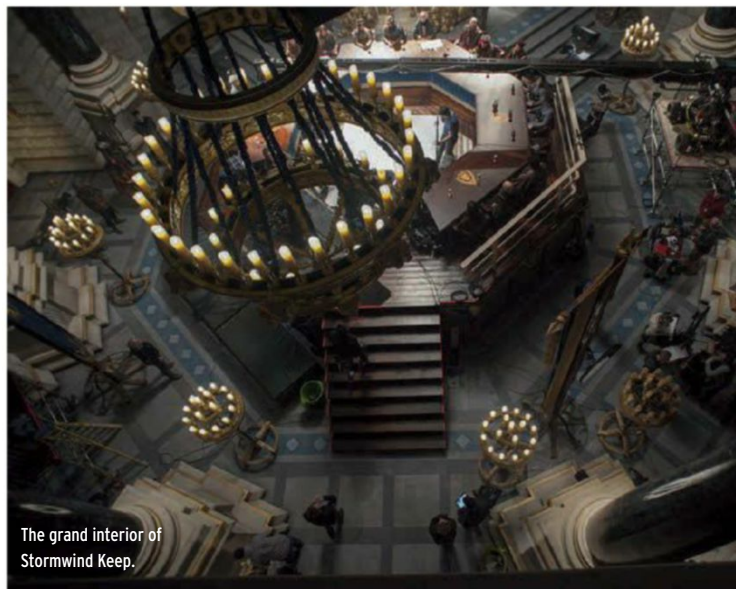
When Jones joined *Warcraft* in January 2013, it was reeling from the aftershocks of its own cataclysm. Director Sam Raimi, who'd been attached since July 2009, had suddenly quit in July 2012. Together with writer Robert Rodat, he'd worked up an original script centred on a human protagonist of their own creation, but, as Raimi told *Vulture* in March 2013, Blizzard revealed it "had never quite approved the original story we pitched them... We basically had to start over."

Chris Metzen, Blizzard's Senior Vice President Of Story And Franchise Development, explains their concern was the average moviegoer who knew nothing of *Warcraft*, with its multifarious cultures and species and mythologies, would "just be thrown into this insanely detailed world, and unable to relate to anything." A frustrated Raimi walked, and three years' hard work had been for naught. The entire project required a reboot.

Working together with Legendary Pictures' Jillian Share and Roven's Atlas Entertainment, Blizzard had to look



Director Duncan Jones getting tool'd up.



The grand interior of Stormwind Keep.



back through 18 years of material, and once more figure out, as Metzen puts it, “Where are we gonna plant a camera for a feature?” They returned to a concept Blizzard itself had favoured as early as 2006: to strip it all back to the franchise’s birth with 1994 strategy game *Orcs & Humans*, which concerned that first-contact conflagration where the brutish, alien orcs arrive in the human lands of Azeroth following the destruction of their own world, Draenor.

Legendary hired *Blood Diamond* writer Charles Leavitt to work up a treatment, but while this concept simplified the world, there was still the problem of perspective. Leavitt’s script was, as Share describes it, “human-centric”. But, according to Metzen, Blizzard wanted to give equal weighting to the orcs, which met with resistance. “The conventional thinking from the production group was, ‘People aren’t gonna understand these orcs, they’re too alien, they’re too weird. Let’s just focus on the human side of things.’”

It was Jones who would break the impasse, and provide what Roven describes as “the missing ingredient”. As Metzen recalls, the first day the *Moon* and *Source Code* director met with Blizzard, Legendary and Atlas, he said, “I see this as 50/50 red and blue, Alliance and Horde. We need to be as invested with the orcs.” Metzen’s contingent “raised our hands in the air and gave a great cry of joy. We knew he was our guy.”

So Jones worked on Leavitt’s treatment and now, just as players of *Warcraft* can choose to become a hero of either the human-led Alliance or the orc-driven Horde, so viewers of the

adaptation will find protagonists on both sides: human champion Anduin Lothar (*Vikings*’ Travis Fimmel), and Durotan, chief of the peace-seeking Frostwolf Tribe (Toby Kebbell). Jones found, he says, “room to express something a little bit more empathetic and ‘human’ about both sides.” He felt that would help open the movie experience out to a broader audience, while also embodying the spirit of the source material. And for all its Tolkienesque touches, make it a whole new flavour of high-fantasy world.

Now all he had to do was build it.

A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

Though many of *Warcraft*’s environments would be digitally rendered, Jones required that as many sets as possible be constructed for real, to be physically populated by both his human cast and his performance-captured orcs. It is important to Jones that, for all its fantasy, his film should have a sense of tactility and veracity.

“Fortunately, I got to be on a few film sets as a kid,” he says. “I was on *Labyrinth* and *Absolute Beginners* [both starring his late father, David Bowie], and both of those had big city environments where they actually built streets you could walk around and look in the shops and see things in the windows. And for me, even just building a big chunk of Stormwind as a city and, again, having shops, having pubs, that to me is just so much fun. Because that’s the definition of creating your own world. And though I’m obviously building a world designed by Blizzard, the opportunity to do that is something very special.” >

THE NUT KICKER

DUNCAN JONES *is*
WRITER-DIRECTOR

“It’s bloody ridiculous!” laughs Duncan Jones down the line from LA when reminded that the mega-budget, effects-heavy *Warcraft* is coming out a couple of years after principal photography in Vancouver wrapped in 2014. “It’s a marathon. If there’s one thing I can say about the hardest part of making a movie like this is, it’s the timescale,” he continues. “For one thing, we never knew it was gonna be this long that we were working on it, and the hardest thing is for three and a half years, you’ve gotta maintain the same focus and the same quality control as you had on day one.”

Luckily for the *Moon* and *Source Code* director, his passion for the source material – he’s been a *Warcraft* player for some 20-odd years – meant that his focus never had much of a chance of going for a casual wander. “I was a massive gamer, I still am,” he says proudly. “I played all the *Warcraft* games back when the first real-time strategy games came out, so I played the original *Orcs & Humans* that our film is based on, and then I played all the way through up until *World Of Warcraft*. I stopped because work got too much, but I was very, very familiar with it.”

As for the notion that no-one has yet to make a decent movie based on a video game (although we’re sure that *Super Mario Bros.* and Jean-Claude Van Damme’s *Street Fighter* must have a fan or two somewhere on the planet), Jones is quick to assert that he’s ready to kick said notion right where it hurts the most. “I’ve been chomping at the bit to try and [change that idea],” Jones states emphatically. “I wanna be the one to kick that in the nuts [laughs]. There’s lots of people talking about video game movies and how the history hasn’t been good, but somebody’s gotta break that curse at some point, and I believe that we’ve done that.”

The *Resident Evil* franchise, Mario and Luigi, et al., take note: your reign of terror may be coming to an end...

JAMES JENNINGS





SWORDS & BEARDS

TRAVIS FIMMEL *is*
ANDUIN LOTHAR

Primarily known for a role as the rugged Ragnar Lothbrok on hit TV series *Vikings*, one may get the sense that casting directors have a thing for seeing Australian actor Travis Fimmel equipped with a beard and a sharp sword. “Yeah, we were shooting between *Vikings* so I couldn’t cut my beard off because I had to go back to shoot [Vikings], so they let me have a beard,” says the laconic Melbourne native. “Believe me, they didn’t want one [in *Warcraft*], but I had to keep it. And the sword thing, yeah, two things with swords, so I’ll have to do a romantic comedy next.”

In *Warcraft*, Fimmel plays Anduin Lothar, a character who gets the rather awesome sounding honorific ‘the Lion of Azeroth’. “He’s sort of commander of the military for the human race,” says Fimmel with none-more-Aussie understatement. “He’s sort of torn between his duties and loyalty to his king, and then his love for his family and his personal relationships. And the whole story’s about two raiders fighting for the one world, and one has to win for one of them to survive. There’s one world and in both races there’s good and bad, so there’s a lot for the audience to root for – it’s not just a typical film where there are definite bad guys and definite good guys.”

As for his experience as a gamer, Fimmel is decidedly old school. “A kid around the corner had *Duck Hunt*, we used to play that,” laughs Fimmel. “But I’ve seen *World Of Warcraft* now because of the film – it’s pretty impressive how the game works and it amazes me how addicted people get to it. You hear these stories about people breaking up with their wives because they play the game too much.”

As for the fabled ‘video game movie curse’, Fimmel is characteristically nonplussed. “Everybody was adamant that we were gonna be respectful to the *Warcraft* fans, but we’re making a movie for the general public. If you like these types of movies, you’ll really enjoy it.” JJ



It’s a kind of magic:
Wizard Khadgar
(Ben Schnetzer)
with Anduin.



When production designer Gavin Bocquet gives *Empire* a tour of the sets scattered around Vancouver during the shoot in April 2014, he begins at Burnaby’s MJA Studios, taking us through a dank dungeon draped with rusted, huge-linked chains. Then, down the road, we explore the market square of human capital Stormwind, where set dressers are busy setting up stalls and filling baskets, boxes and crates. And at the main production base of Canadian Motion Picture Park (CMPP), we watch a human-versus-orc skirmish on the volcanic no-man’s land of Blackrock Valley, before being granted access to the still-under-construction “Energy Chamber” atop wizard’s tower Karazhan, a huge, spherical, three-storey space with winding, grey-stone stairways where, says Bocquet’s art director Dan Hermansen, a “cat-and-mouse” action scene will take place.

It all retains that distinct feel of *Warcraft* chunkiness — every

environment is scaled up, from the flagstones on the floor, to the trees of the forests, to the cloud-scraping mountain ranges, to give a sense of inherent epicness. “We wanted to try to keep that scale,” says Bocquet, who at one point had to construct his own forest of 12-foot-thick trees at CMPP, because even the fattest, oldest oaks in the world weren’t broad enough for Jones’s Elwynn Forest. “It’s impressive, and bombastic, and playful, like the game,” he adds, “but we had to have a grittiness — it couldn’t be *that* playful. Duncan wanted it transformed into a *real* world.”

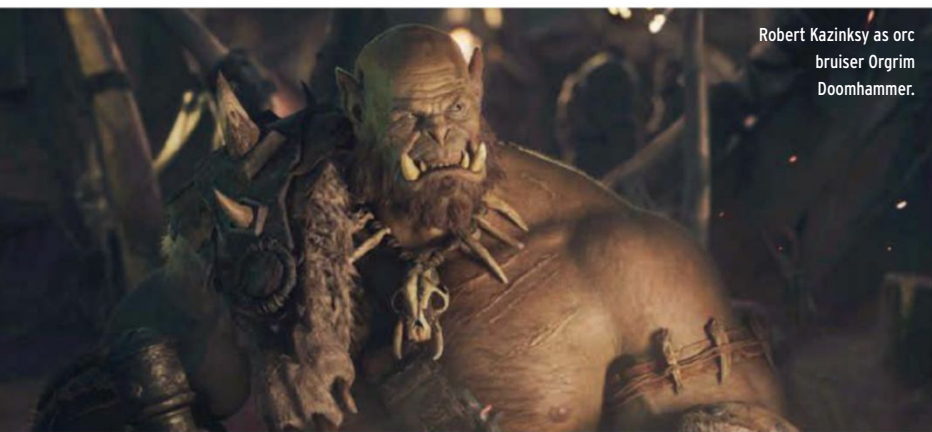
WALKING AND ORCING

Jones also had to populate that world with characters just as ‘real’ as the environments he built, no matter how monstrous they appeared.

When Metzen was first shown footage of the principal orc character, Durotan, he was so impressed, he says, he



Orc Frostwolf clan chieftain Durotan (Toby Kebbell).



Robert Kazinsky as orc bruiser Orgrim Doomhammer.

jumped into the lap of his colleague, Blizzard lead artist Nick Carpenter. “The level of detail is just unprecedented,” says Metzen, who was the first to draw the character himself, decades earlier. “There was this sense of *soul* behind Durotan’s eyes. I’m watching this character with these tusks and these hyper-proportionate facial features, and he’s utterly inhuman but at the same time so impossibly human: this dad, this husband, sitting in the dark thinking about the world burning down around him.”

As with *Avatar* and the recent *Planet Of The Apes* films, the only way to achieve the empathetic impact was to motion-capture actors in orc roles. In addition to Kebbell, Kazinsky, Clancy Brown, Anna Galvin and Daniel Wu donned the grey-unitard mo-cap uniform. But, unlike the beasts of Peter Jackson’s Middle-earth, *Warcraft* orcs have a particular look which made the digital transformation that much more of a challenge. “Their heads are the same

size as a human’s,” explains Jones, “but the proportions go gigantic as you get to the neck, the shoulders and the hands. The hands are *huge*. It’s almost like a homunculus. It’s a weird shape to realise in a way that doesn’t look odd.”

Blizzard artist Wei Wang was on hand to help preserve the true orc-look, while Westenhofer’s team at ILM utilised a set-up whereby they could track roughly rendered versions of the bulky, eight-foot orcs moving around on monitors as the slimmer, smaller actors who played them performed on stage. Meanwhile, motion specialist Terry Notary boot-camped the actors to ensure their every mannerism would hold a Draenor-orc’s proportions. “With Terry, we sat in the Volume and went over and over how these orcs behave,” says Westenhofer. “We wanted something that showed the weight, but wasn’t lumbering. And as part of this process, the actors aren’t just acting. They are puppeteering themselves — moving as if they have so much more mass.” >



FROM APE TO ORC

TOBY KEBBELL *is*
DUROTAN

Having done mo-cap work as ape Koba in *Dawn Of The Planet Of The Apes* as well as assisting with the role of King Kong in 2017’s *Kong: Skull Island*, the question must be asked: is Toby Kebbell aiming to take Andy Serkis’s coveted mo-cap crown? “It’s a hell of a crown to reach for, man, I’ll tell you that,” the Brit actor laughs. “I’m very happy working mo-cap, and it’s actually thanks to Andy more than anything — he gave me the opportunity to audition for Koba. I don’t wanna get too serious but I owe him a great deal and it’s a great craft.”

Like his director, Kebbell is quite adamant that the ‘video game movie curse’ won’t apply to *Warcraft*. “The curse is broken on this one,” he says plainly. “It’s been such a solid effort from everyone involved, and definitely from our great director Duncan, to make sure that this is an exceptional movie. It’s an action-adventure movie that you’re gonna enjoy whether you know who the characters are or not.” And will *Warcraft*’s rabid fan base be pleased with the results? “I don’t doubt, like with Tolkien fans, there’s gonna be people who imagined something different, but we’ve got on pretty good authority from [*Warcraft creators*] Blizzard that this is as close as has ever been gotten to making it absolutely authentic,” says Kebbell. “We were definitely trying to satisfy fans, that was first and foremost, but we were also trying to make a movie that everyone could sit and enjoy and identify with.”

One skill Kebbell needed for the role was the ability to speak orcish — a skill he admits he didn’t retain. “You know, it’s like going on holiday to France, that summer where you fall in love with that girl, and you just remember those beautiful French words and as soon as it’s over, you can’t remember a word apart from ‘bonjour,’” Kebbell laughs. “I was doing it with Paula Patton, so I’m hanging out with this stunning girl trying to get the intonation right. And once it was over, it seems like a blur. So no orcish in my blood.” JJ





THE ORC MOMMY

PAULA PATTON *is*
GARONA

American actress Paula Patton has done big before – she starred in the fourth *Mission: Impossible* movie, *Ghost Protocol* – but Tom Cruise’s globe-trotting spy fest ain’t got a patch on the scale of *Warcraft*. “It’s really quite surreal, to be honest with you, just to watch it afterwards,” Patton tells us from L.A. “Even when we were in it, you could feel that it was this epic scale, but certainly having watched a cut of the film, it was quite surreal. It was an incredible experience to play this character, Garona. She’s half-orc, half-human, and that was a very unique thing for me to try to tackle.”

Unlike several of her co-stars, Patton skipped the mo-cap suit for some good ol’ make-up and prosthetics to achieve her half-half look (although her green skin tone, she admits, was achieved in post). “I had tattoos and tusks and it was quite an undertaking. It was one of those things that in the moment you’re like, ‘Oh god, this is taking forever,’ but then you come to appreciate it because getting into not just hair and make-up but then also the costume and then finally putting my tusks in, that really helped me feel like Garona,” says Patton. “I had these very unique green contacts that were different colours, each one, the left and right were different, and it obscured my vision in some way. It sort of made me feel more animalistic and separate from the humans I interacted with because of the way I saw things. It was really interesting.”

Patton also managed to swipe a few prosthetic items to take home with her – something that brought her six-year-old son much joy. “I couldn’t get every ear, but I got a couple, and my son absolutely adored it,” she says. “He loved orc mommy because I’d often walk around the house with my tusks in my mouth so that I could get adjusted to speaking with them because they give you quite a lisp. I remember taping the ears to [my son’s] ears and he just loved it. He thought it was just the coolest thing.” JJ



Kazinsky, who plays Durotan’s loyal lieutenant Orgrim, says that “physically it’s very demanding”, even though he himself is an impressive 6’ 1” and weighs more than 90kg. “There is no generic ‘orc walk’,” he says. “Durotan has a more upright, panoramic view of the world, while Orgrim is just very straight ahead and more like, ‘Let’s have a fight.’ But we all have that same huge weight to our movement. After 12 hours of walking like an orc, it’s exhausting.”

Still, as a 480-day veteran of the game who “banged on doors” to secure a role, he’s not complaining. “There’s been moments I’ve stepped onto a set and my mind has just melted,” he says. “It’s been the most joyous movie I’ve worked on.”

WORKING MAGIC

As part-time mage Bill Westenhofer well knows, *World Of Warcraft* is as much about the magic as it is the monsters, whether it’s wizards flinging arcane missiles holy light-beams, or warlocks dishing out curses. Two of the principal human characters in the film, Medivh (Ben Foster) and Khadgar (Ben Schnetzer), are wizards from the game’s history, so Westenhofer was delighted to find himself discussing with them how the sorcerous VFX would work: “The nerd in me said, ‘I am teaching Khadgar and Medivh how to cast spells!’”

He was just as concerned, he says, with making the on-screen effects match the in-game ones, thereby making it feel as real as magic can. “When Khadgar casts a shield spell, you’ll see it blast away some of the dust around him. When he blasts something, it actually

kicks up debris and knocks a chunk off a wall. That way, you feel a connection to the environment.”

However, both he and Jones were concerned not to go overboard with the spellcasting, for fear of blinding the audience with candy-firework effects. Just as the story holds back on the lore and Azeroth’s other races and monsters (though we will get to see dwarves, elves, gryphons and worgs), so it keeps the magic in the hands of a select few.

“This is an introduction, so we are keeping it simple at this stage,” says Jones. “But if things go well, and people like *Warcraft*, one of the things that we would love to do in a follow-up would be to kind of explode magic, to make it suddenly be everywhere, with everyone having access to it. Show how it really kind of screws the system. But that’s for the future.”

A future which is entirely in the hands of *Warcraft*’s audience, Jones and his producers point out. “The fans have to tell us [they want more movies],” cautions Roven. “Those that know the game and those that don’t.” Metzen, though, has been so heartened by the way the cinematic version of his world was built by genuine *WoW*-heads — the warrior-director, producer-paladin, mage-VFX-supervisor, actor-death knight — he allows himself to daydream a long, cinematic future for *Warcraft*.

“I daydream it *all*,” he says. “If you’re clever you can get 20 movies out of this world.” By which point, you imagine, the decade spent getting it spinning will feel like no time at all.

WARCRAFT IS OUT ON JUNE 16 AND WILL BE REVIEWED IN A FUTURE ISSUE.



Anduin Lothar (Travis Fimmel) lays waste to some orcs.



HAMMER TIME

ROBERT KAZINSKY *is*
ORGRIM DOOMHAMMER

Does British actor Robert Kazinsky realise the name of his *Warcraft* character, Orgrim Doomhammer, is in fact one of the coolest names ever used in a film? "Yup," he confirms. "It's also the name of my penis." Okay. Fair enough then.

Doomy, as he's known to mates (probably), is the right-hand orc to Toby Kebbell's orc leader Durotan. Putting on the mo-cap pyjamas to play the hulking Doomhammer proved to be a dream come true for Kazinsky, a long-time fan of *Warcraft* who sees the game as something of a life-changer. "I worked on *EastEnders*, and I didn't play a particularly nice guy so I'd walk down the street and people would walk up to me and punch me in the back of the head, or throw stones at me or I'd go for dinner and people would hurl bread rolls across restaurants," he says. "It made me retreat into myself, and I ended up completely isolated – and then I started playing the game. This game was the first place I'd been in a really long time where I had anonymity, where I was being judged upon my ability rather than the person I was, and I was really good. This game introduced me to the same 35 people that I've been playing with for 10 years. And the game – I mean it really does sound like a fanciful story – but it kind of saved my life in a lot of ways, and it brought me out of a very, very dark place. So this game means the world to me, and this film means the world to me."

As you could imagine, Kazinsky wasn't backwards in being forward about wanting a part in the film. "[Production company] Legendary did *Pacific Rim*, which I was also in – and also I'll just take the opportunity to apologise for my Australian accent in that – and I was on set and sat next to [producer] Jillian Share, and I pull out my laptop and I start to load up *Warcraft*, and she told me about the film. That's the biggest mistake she ever made – I would harass her on a weekly basis. Getting the role was like the ultimate gift for me. I'd have paid to do this film, you know what I mean?" JJ



WARCRAFT IN THE WORLD

WILLIAM SHATNER AND CHUCK NORRIS ADVERTISED IT, MILA KUNIS AND VIN DIESEL PLAYED IT, BUT *WORLD OF WARCRAFT*'S TENDRILS HAVE SPREAD FURTHER THAN A FEW FAMOUS ADVOCATES...

SOUTH PARK

Widely regarded as one of the show's best episodes, Season 10's *Make Love, Not Warcraft* saw Cartman, Kyle, Stan and Kenny suffering a full-blown WoW addiction. Partly created from game footage (developer Blizzard proved surprisingly amenable), it saw the gang brave scorn, obesity and RSI to take down a super high-level player in-game.

THE BIG BANG THEORY

No surprises that a show about übergeeks should have its own *Warcraft*-themed diversions. Not only do Howard and Bernadette split after she catches him "doing the cybernasty" with Lucinda the troll, but Sheldon's level 85 blood elf gets hacked and the thief makes off with his gold armour and Wand Of Untainted Power.

LEEROY JENKINS

Of the countless *Warcraft* memes, Leeroy Jenkins (Google it) is by far the most famous. Revolving around said character's kamikaze tendencies, the viral video gave birth to his signature battle cry ("Leeeeroy Jenkinssss"),



variants of which are shouted in both an episode of *How I Met Your Mother* and Jason Lee comedy *My Name Is Earl*.

ZEALOUS: LEVEL UP

American rapper ZeaLouS1 (the self-styled 'Sleeping Dragon of Nerdcore') released the track *Level Up* in 2009. Not only did the video feature a dancing Tauren but it boasted such lyrical genius as: "I level up my Druid when I'm playing World Of Warcraft/ Stompin' anybody close to my warpath/ It got serious, I'm passin' up booty/ So I can finish the quest 'cause that is my duty." Word.

THE GUILD

Geek queen Felicia Day (known on screen primarily for *Supernatural*) hit the spotlight with web sitcom *The Guild*, based around a group of WoW players and their demented antics both in-game and 'IRL'. *Warcraft* is never directly named for legal reasons but the show is as knowing and affectionate a look at WoW gamer culture as you'll find.

JAMES DYER



The GOOD NEIGHBOUR

Superhero blockbuster, indie drama or balls-out comedy, **Rose Byrne** can handle them all. And she'll bust a few clichés for good measure

WORDS JIMI FAMUREWA PORTRAITS DAVID SLIJPER

SHE MAY DEPICT ONE OF the *X-Men* universe's few non-mutant characters but, in real life, Rose Byrne is adept at shape-shifting. She's had three very different movies hit cinemas in the past month: keg-rolling debauchery in *Bad Neighbours 2*; *X-Men: Apocalypse*, her return to the mutant world as CIA agent Moira MacTaggart; and sweet mother-daughter dramedy *The Meddler*.

The 36-year-old recently gave birth to her first child, a boy called Rocco, and she is still adjusting to her new normal. "He's two months old so the sleep's not great," says Byrne brightly. "It's still early days so there's a lot of coffee but I haven't quite hit the Red Bull yet," she laughs.

Your role in *Bad Neighbours* was unlike many of the sidelined female characters in these big, male-skewed comedies. Was that something you had a direct hand in?

Well, I'm lucky because Nick [Stoller, the director] was championing that from the get-go. We were really on the same page. The first film script had a few different incarnations, and my first note was always, "I'm not interested in playing the nagging wife," and that's what Nick wanted to do as well. So it was great, and a really fun collaboration.

You've reinvented yourself as a comedic actor in the past few years. Did that come organically or did you have to push for it? Yeah, it was a bit of both. I'd been dying to do comedy so I was really stoked to get into *Get Him To The Greek* because that was an incredible opportunity. Auditioning for that was really a big deal.

For sure, though, there's that thing of knowing what to turn down. After *Bridesmaids* I got offered a lot of uptight female characters in comedy. You just have to navigate it and try to make sure you're not repeating yourself.

Some of your frequent collaborators, like Melissa McCarthy and Seth Rogen, have a background in improv comedy, even stand-up. Were you ever tempted to try it?

No, I've never done an improv comedy class and obviously I haven't done any stand-up, which I genuinely think is one of the hardest and most daunting things you can do. The improvisation has definitely been something I've learnt on the job and that really started with *Get Him To The Greek*, where the philosophy was just "say whatever you want". Russell was incredibly patient with me as I learnt the ropes on that one. The character was pretty fun because she was so freewheeling and loose, so that helped. I just watched endless video clips and interviews with pop stars ❶.

Which are the comedy scenes you've done that have been hardest to nail?

Definitely the toast scene in *Bridesmaids*. We did a lot of versions of that. We did the scripted version then we would improv. It was a big set-piece and we did that the whole night.

You've also starred in smaller projects like the *Insidious* films. Do you miss that?

It's lovely to have diversity in any career, whether it's something like *Bad Neighbours* or something small like *The Meddler* ❷. If I could keep juggling things

like that I'd feel very happy. We had a great time on *Insidious*. We shot that first one in 22 days. James Wan, the director, is so terrific and such a hard worker. Me and Patrick [Wilson, her co-star] hit it off and it was just this dirty little horror movie that James took complete control of. It was a cool little script and it was fun. It felt like guerrilla filmmaking. No money, no trailers, nothing. Just us in a scary house.

Proof that it's not all about plentiful catering options.

[Laughs] Yeah, exactly. You can cope.

Then there's *X-Men: Apocalypse*, where you're a cog in a huge juggernaut...

Well, [on *X-Men*] behind the scenes it's just hilarious. Everyone's in their classic costumes and poor Oscar [Isaac] was blue and covered in tentacles. Nick Hoult is blue as well, Jen [Lawrence] is in her scaly costume. It's like *Saturday Night Live*, or something. Everyone is just standing around and it's hysterical. But I'm so lucky because I don't have to get dressed or anything, I'm just this mortal. I am so proud to be part of that universe, it is such a different beast to some of my other films but it's so fun and the fans love it.

In the age of release schedules plotted a decade in advance, would you be reluctant to sign up if a big franchise came along?

I really don't think it would give me pause. So many incredible actors do franchises then do independent films and then do theatre. It's a different kind of business now and everyone is across genres all the time. ➤

The **EMPIRE** Interview



Above left: With Kristen Wiig in *Bridesmaids*.

Above right: 2010's *Get Him To The Greek*.

Here: As a non-mutant in *X-Men: Apocalypse*.



Reuniting with screen spouse Seth Rogen in *Bad Neighbours 2*.



With Melissa McCarthy in last year's *Spy*.

“I’m so lucky on *X-Men* because I don’t have to dress up. I’m just mortal.”

Is there some vindication that Academy Award-winners aren’t above reaching for the capes and blue paint?

Yes, but it’s not that you’re thinking, “Well, everyone’s doing it, so I should.” Actually, they’re just fun films and they’re good films. The *Avengers* films, *Iron Man*, they’re good quality... and there are plenty of independent films that are dull, too. Just because something has been made for eight dollars, it doesn’t mean it’s going to be a great movie.

Your TV show *Damages* ❶ arrived at an important time for TV. Did you know then you were part of something special?

We came out the same year as *Mad Men*, in 2007, and so it definitely was part of the renaissance of television. I felt lucky to be a part of it and it did feel special. To be able to work with Glenn [Close] every day and to have this incredible story unfolding... I loved that period, I really enjoyed it and I would love to do more TV. I’m a huge TV watcher.

What are your current TV obsessions? I’d say *Vinyl* on HBO is fantastic and of course, I’m not biased at all [laughs] ❷.

We’ve been watching *Girls*. I love it so much. I’m a huge fan, I’ve seen every episode. And we’ve been watching *The People v. O.J. Simpson*. It’s fantastic. Our friend Sarah Paulson is on it, playing Marcia Clark, and she’s great. It’s so fun.

Reboots like *Annie* increasingly seem to prompt an uproar online. Why?

I suppose there is a scrutiny that’s put on these things, especially if it’s a remake. Whether it’s *Ghostbusters* or *Annie*, which was a remake that wasn’t received well. They really changed the casting on that, obviously. ❸ But there’s such vitriol, you know? It’s so rare that people shine a light on people saying something positive.

It’s often led by quite a small minority looking for attention.

Exactly. Why is it only the people who say negative stuff about changing casting, whether it’s from a man to a woman or the ethnicity of a character? I’m sure there are positive things being said, but those people never get the microphone.

X-MEN: APOCALYPSE IS REVIEWED ON PAGE 34. THE MEDDLER IS REVIEWED ON PAGE 38.



As Grace in 2014’s *Annie* reboot, with Quvenzhané Wallis.



As Rose in calling card *Capture The Castle* (2003).



As pilot Cassie in 2007’s *Sunshine*.

FOOTNOTES

❶ These included Amy Winehouse, Gwen Stefani, Beyoncé, Lady Gaga, the Spice Girls and, appropriately given her co-star, Katy Perry.

❷ Byrne plays Susan Sarandon’s put-upon daughter in the Los Angeles-set film that she describes as a “sweet, heartfelt comedy”.

❸ Byrne appeared in all 59 episodes of *Damages*; it earned her two Golden Globe noms, two Emmy noms and an AFI award.

❹ Byrne’s partner Bobby Cannavale stars in *Vinyl* and, having worked with him in *Spy* and *Annie*, she is “trying to hustle a part” in the ‘70s rock drama.

❺ Quvenzhané Wallis (*Beasts Of The Southern Wild*) played lil’ orphan Annie; Wallis got a Golden Globe nod for the role.

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You Called?

After 27 years, the Ghostbusters are finally back...
with a completely new line-up. Director **Paul Feig** and his cast
explain why this all-new origin story is the ideal franchise resurrection

WORDS: NICK DE SEMLYEN



THE GHOSTBUSTERS ARE BACK IN business. *Empire* can testify to this, since we're standing outside the supernatural exterminators' iconic Hook & Ladder 8 firehouse HQ, next to not one but two parked Ectomobiles. Walking in, we clock gleaming white surfaces, a Terror Dog head mounted on the wall like a hunting trophy, and a receptionist behind a vast desk. Although she doesn't yell, "We got one!", it's enough to make us wonder if we've accidentally stepped through some sort of portal to the seventh dimension.

This, though, is not on a New York street but the Sony lot in Culver City, Los Angeles. There's no sign of Ray sliding down the firepole or Egon inspecting spores, moulds and fungi. Instead, we're greeted by Ivan Reitman, director of the first two *Ghostbusters* movies. "Welcome to Ghost Corps," he smiles. "Sorry about the mess. We're still moving in."

Open only since October and overseen by Reitman and Dan Aykroyd, this is mission control for all things *Ghostbusters*. When not decorating their offices — Reitman's has an unopened LEGO firehouse set on the floor; Aykroyd's has portraits of famous supernaturalists on the wall, plus a Bill Murray mug on his desk — the pair devote their time to plotting the course of the *Ghostbusters* Cinematic Universe, a slimier version of what Marvel has achieved. It's an astonishing turnaround for the duo, who since the 1989 sequel had strived to pull off another film, but until recently had all but given up the ghost.

"It was partially our fault," Reitman explains. "We made this very complicated deal when we did *Ghostbusters II* which gave each of us [Reitman, Aykroyd, Bill Murray and Harold Ramis] equal power. That froze everything, because any one of us could block something from

Above: Turn it up to 666: Ghostbusters Abby Yates (Melissa McCarthy), Jillian Holtzmann (Kate McKinnon), Erin Gilbert (Kristen Wiig) and Patty Tolan (Leslie Jones) take on a winged demon at a rock concert.



GHOSTBUSTERS SPECIAL



Right: Director Paul Feig inspects the new Proton Packs.



happening. Finally, a few things came to a head. We couldn't get any traction from Bill in terms of doing another one, because his brain was elsewhere. And when Harold [Ramis] died [in February 2014] I was kinda depressed, and decided I wasn't going to direct the next film myself. But everybody seemed to agree it's not fair of us just to leave the thing fallow. So finally we made a deal with Sony: they were free to expand what the series could be."

Here at Ghost Corps, then, is where an array of ectoplasmic projects are in development. There's what Reitman calls the "futuristic" film, to which the Russo Brothers were briefly attached and in which, rumours have swirled, Channing Tatum and Chris Pratt will star. ("A lot of stuff leaked out of here," Reitman frowns. "It involved different teams of Ghostbusters. It's on hold; we'll see what happens.") There's another, yet-to-be-announced live-action film, which is "coming along really well". There's an animated feature, which Reitman will co-direct. And a TV show is in the works, which may have a more global flavour: "There's ghost lore in every tradition. It's totally different in China and Japan and Korea, and there's extraordinary opportunity in that."

But before any of that can happen, a different project has to become a sizeable

hit. Rarely has there been so much pressure on one movie — or one team.

Paul Feig strides across

the cavernous building where much of *Ghostbusters* 2016 is being shot, a former Reebok warehouse not far from Boston. The director clearly has no need of a walking stick, but he's holding one anyway: a remarkable thing with a skull atop it. "It's a medical student's cane, over 100 years old," he explains. "I collect antique walking sticks — I've got about 60 of them. When we moved here my wife discovered an antique store, run by a woman whose father has an astonishing collection. We arranged a meet and it was like one of those movies where guys show up to do a gun deal in a hotel. He opened up these suitcases, and this was one he had in there."

The relentlessly well-dressed filmmaker behind *Spy*, *Bridesmaids* and *The Heat*, Feig feels like a natural choice to shoot the first new *Ghostbusters* movie in 27 years — and not just because he likes skulls. He grew up obsessed with Bill Murray and Dan Aykroyd's *Saturday Night Live* skits. He loves improvisation (Murray, famously, made up most of Peter Venkman's lines on the 1984 film). He's so into hardware he once built his own robot ("It was this weird thing with a bowl for a head... I think he's out in

some landfill somewhere") and is made as giddy by the Ghostbusters' tech, their ecto-insulated encapsulators and PKE valances, as their jokes.

Still, he initially turned it down. "I was in Budapest making *Spy*," he recalls, "when I was contacted by Ivan, who at that point had another script." Written by Gene Stupnitsky and Lee Eisenberg, veterans of the US version of *The Office*, it involved the original Ghostbusters (minus Ramis) passing their slime-jars to a new team. "I was flattered, but I'm always so leery of reunion shows. I prefer an origin story."

Then, in July 2014, midway through his morning walk and still mulling over the possibilities, Feig was hit by an idea. "I thought, 'What if you knocked it sideways and cast it with all the funny women I love working with? That I know how to do.'" For him, the idea of replacing Murray, Aykroyd, Ramis and Ernie Hudson with four female comedians was not a cute gimmick, but an organic twist on the formula. After all, Feig has done more than anyone to put "funny women" in the spotlight, from giving his muse Melissa McCarthy her breakout opportunity in *Bridesmaids* to writing juicy roles for Kristen Wiig, Sandra Bullock, Rose Byrne and more.

He mentioned this thought to his agent, and within minutes had an

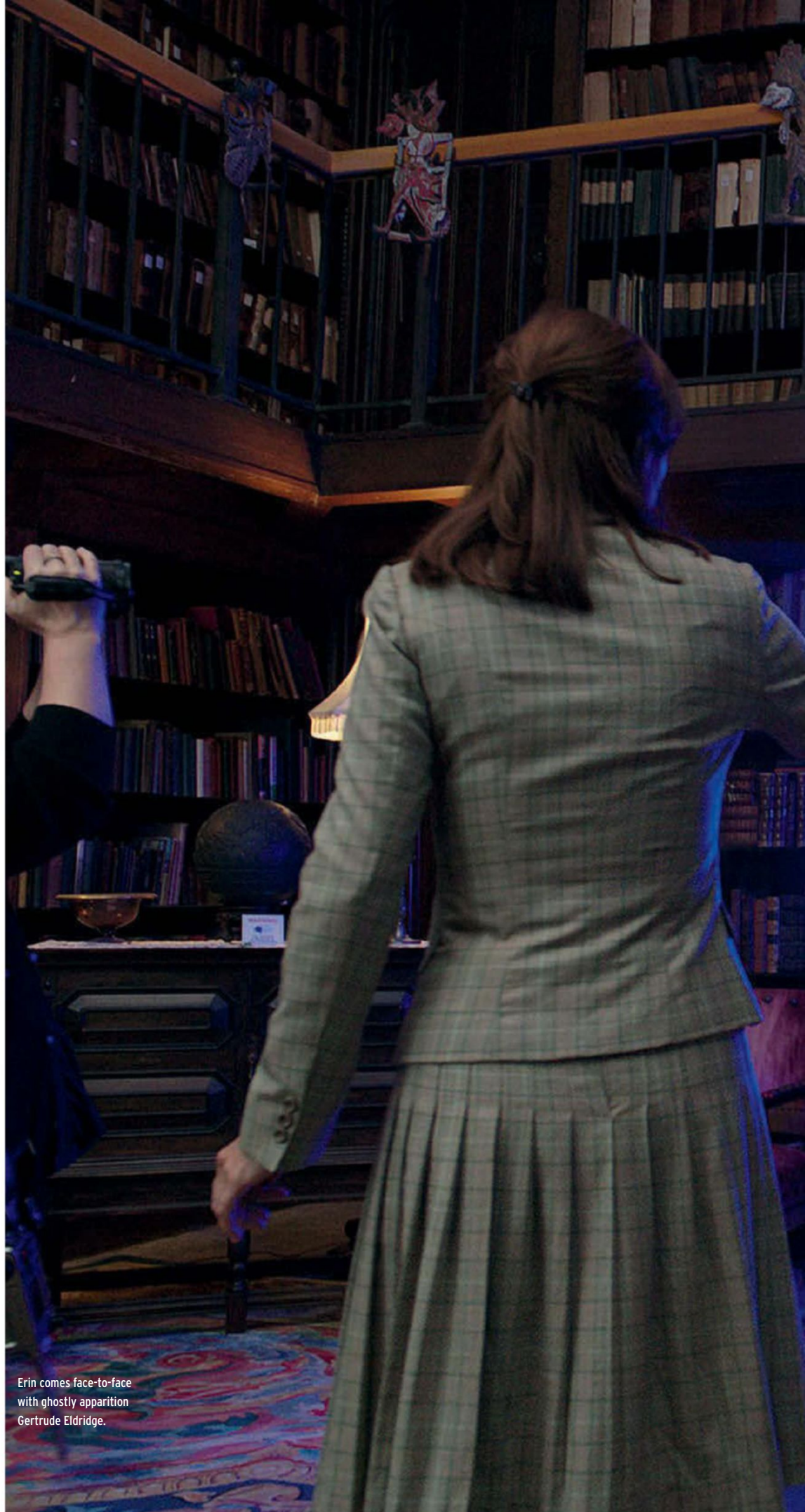
excited Amy Pascal, then the head of Sony Pictures, on the phone. Feig called his writing partner Katie Dippold and arranged to meet with her on the convention floor at Comic-Con. Next to a *Guardians Of The Galaxy* space-pod in the Marvel section, to be precise. “I have to laugh,” Feig says, “because whatever haters we have, this was hatched right in the middle of their enclave.”

Haters, it's fair to say, they do have. Since the minute it was announced, online comment sections have festered with rage about the project. Infuriated a *Ghostbusters* movie is being made without Bill Murray at its centre, and pushed to apoplexy by the fact its stars are female, enough people have derided Feig's film, sight unseen, to agitate a river of pink slime. (“In July we will see if women really can do anything as good as men. If their purpose was to make a shitty film, I guess we can already say they did it way better,” reads a measured response on YouTube from ‘Dr. Hatespeech’). “As soon as it was announced, someone on Twitter said he hoped I got a mild flu,” remembers the director. “There was another guy who wanted Katie and me to die under a truck and taste our own blood.”

Responding to those who say, ‘It's Venkman, not Venkwoman,’ Pascal tells *Empire*, “I know people are talking about this being the ‘girl version’, but this is no more a chick flick than *Gravity*. They're scientists, they're Ghostbusters, and I just want that to be a normal thing.”

Having disconnected their internet, Feig and Dippold began the script in October 2014, keeping Halloween decorations up at Dippold's house throughout the writing process to enhance the mood. “We had a skeleton watching over us until Christmas,” she laughs. “I'm a huge horror fan, so for me the most fun part was the scary-ghost stuff, finding insane situations into which to drop these four funny people.”

Feig already had his stars in mind, all with *Saturday Night Live* experience: Wiig as everyscientist Erin Gilbert, McCarthy as her ghost-enthusiast best friend Abby Yates, Kate McKinnon as zany nuclear engineer Jillian Holtzmann, and relative newcomer (albeit, at 48, the oldest of the group) Leslie Jones as subway employee Patty Tolan. Continuing the gender-flipping, Chris Hemsworth would play dim-witted but enthusiastic secretary Kevin. The story being crafted around these heroes was a reboot, not a sequel — “I wanted to start with a clean slate... In this world, there's



Erin comes face-to-face with ghostly apparition Gertrude Eldridge.



GHOSTBUSTERS
SPECIAL





not yet proof of ghosts,” says Feig — with a combination of nostalgic beats (Slimer’s back, as is Mr Stay Puft, though not in the form you might expect) and fresh material.

As they typed, the co-writers felt enormous pressure on their shoulders. Then one morning a FedEx delivery arrived. “I was particularly stressed that day,” Dippold recalls. “I opened up the package and inside was a copy of a book about ghosts Dan Aykroyd’s dad had written. Attached was a note from Dan: ‘Dear Katie, I’m here if you need any help, but most of all just enjoy yourself.’ That was an important reminder: first and foremost, *Ghostbusters* is meant to be fun.”

Empire soon gets to

witness the fun for ourselves. Among the sets spread across the Norwood building are an authentically grubby New York subway tunnel and an even grubbier

abandoned Chinese restaurant (‘Zhu’s Authentic Hong Kong Food’) that doubles as our heroes’ HQ. But most impressive is a two-storey Art Deco lobby, which today is bathed in an eerie Slimer-green glow. This is the Mercado Hotel, in which two of the new Ghostbusters — Kristen Wiig and Melissa McCarthy — are currently on patrol, brandishing charged-up proton guns for their pursuit of an entity named “Rowan”. A class-5 free-roaming vapor? An electrokinetic spectre? An octopus that can predict soccer results? It’s anyone’s guess.

Feig, who in his three-piece suit looks like he could be reprising the ’84 film’s snooty concierge, signals for the cameras to roll. Wiig and McCarthy say their scripted lines. Then they start to throw in their own variations. Before long, Feig and Dippold are scribbling lines on Post-It notes, which are whizzed across to the actors. The result is a

lengthy succession of takes that feature, among many others, the following “alts”:

“Eat my stream, a-hole!”

“Eat my proton!”

“Show yourself, you little troll...”

“Come out, Rowan. There’s a toilet that needs unclogging.”

“Rowan, collect your virginity from the lost and found.”

“I can do this all day, Rowan. Busting makes me feel good.”

“I actually feel kind of terrible. My knees are clicking, my biceps are on fire and my hands are cramping up...”

Eventually, a chandelier crashes down and the pair let loose their proton streams. It turns out there are a few perils when it comes to shooting a *Ghostbusters* action sequence. One is obvious: don’t cross the streams. “Oops, I just killed you!” beams McCarthy, accidentally slicing through Wiig’s legs. Another

Above left: Paul Feig directs on-set at Ghostbusters HQ.



Above: Chris Hemsworth aka dim-witted Kevin, given the once-over by Erin, Abby and Jillian for the job of secretary.

concern: not looking like a complete berk. “I’ve had some trouble with my proton face,” says Wiig. “I found I was making a face that was not anything I’d want to see really large on the screen, so I had to find a new one for myself. I just could not go with the original.”

As for the final alt line quoted above, there’s some fact mixed in with the fiction. “At one point I had to tell Paul, ‘Hey, I’m a comedian. I’m not a fucking stunt person! What the fuck, yo?’” laughs Leslie Jones, who says she lost a stack of weight during the shoot. “He’d always be like, ‘You can do it, Jones. Come on.’ We’ve been doing some Van Damme shit on this one.”

In this *Ghostbusters* film, the slimings are more vigorous (“Water actually activates it, so if you think you have it all off and then you get wet, the slime comes back,” says Wiig ruefully). There are possession scenes. There will even be a bout of hand-to-ghost-hand

combat in Times Square, thanks to new tech dreamed up by Holtzmann (and approved off-screen by an MIT professor of engineering). “I mostly drew details from my own little bank vault of weirdness,” says McKinnon of her bizarre-looking, fingerless gloves-wearing character, who is fast becoming an internet favourite. “In my youth, all I did was take apart electronics and pretend each circuit board was its own world.”

At Feig’s insistence, wherever possible the ghosts have been played by actors on set, sometimes performers on stilts. “In the original they were kinda cartoony, which I like,” he says, “but I want everything in this movie to be as real as a movie based on fake stuff can be.” According to the cast, it worked. “The first ghost we saw, we were all legitimately scared,” says McCarthy. “With the make-up and the costumes and the light, they looked pretty darn terrifying. One ➤

BEST IN SHOW

WE PICK OUR FAVOURITE SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE SKETCHES FOR EACH OF THE NEW GHOSTBUSTERS



Kristen Wiig: Surprise Party

Wiig’s best characters are completely deranged. Here, Sue can’t cope with the prospect of an impending surprise party she’s helping to throw, and mentally collapses at the promise of balloons and clowns.



Melissa McCarthy: Women’s Group

McCarthy’s roster of SNL sketches is short, but she makes her characters count. Take troubled, combat trouser-wearing PJ, who derails a gentle women’s group’s discussion with her plans to avenge her father’s bloody death.



Leslie Jones: Crazy Bitches

Jones’s SNL persona is frequently furious. Sliding in as a “relationship expert”, she explains exactly what about men makes women crazy. “Every girl grew up with some uncle staring at them at Thanksgiving, saying how much you’ve grown...”



Kate McKinnon: Cecilia Giménez

One of SNL’s great chameleons – her Justin Bieber is spot on – McKinnon’s best moment sees her becoming a crazed version of Cecilia Giménez, the Spanish woman who became famous for ‘repairing’, i.e. ruining, an ancient portrait of Jesus. **OLLY RICHARDS**

SLIME AND SLIME AGAIN

PREPARE TO MEET SLIMER 2.0

"IF I SAW A *GHOSTBUSTERS* REBOOT, there are a bunch of things I'd be really bummed about if they didn't show up," says Paul Feig. "So we've put them in, but we've given them our own spin." Hence the new Ecto-1: not the famous Miller Meteor 1959 Cadillac, but a '93 Caddy Fleetwood hearse. The proton packs are jazzed up (check out that psychokinetic energy sink!). The jumpsuits now have hot-orange piping. And most excitingly of all, cinema's greediest ghost is now even uglier.

"We have six effects houses working on the movie, and the thing all of them wanted to do was Slimer," says VFX supervisor Peter Travers. In the end the coveted job went to Sony Pictures Imageworks and MPC. "When we started research we realised that he's amorphous – even within the first movie there are multiple puppets that look radically different – which gave us free rein to make him a little grosser. We've added random bits of hair in weird places, like he's an old person. And we've added a bunch of goopy slime to him, just pouring off his arms. I mean, he is called Slimer."

Originally inspired by John Belushi, for the first two films the toothy, gibbering, potato-shaped blob was achieved largely with puppets. The new movie combines old technology (a fully articulated Slimer was built and operated by *Ghostbusters* veteran Rick Lazzarini) with new (CG augmentation) to create the most disgusting and deranged version yet.

"The guy is a loose cannon," says Travers. "I think that's where we've pushed the performance: he's just not mentally there, he's crazy, he's completely unpredictable. You can stuff five emotions into a two-second shot."



ghost chased me down a subway tunnel; only afterwards did I realise it was a guy called Dave who I've known for 15 years."

Another way Feig has shaken up the formula: for the first time, the primary villain of a *Ghostbusters* film is a human. Yes, that "Rowan" the team are hunting in the Mercado turns out to be a regular bloke, albeit a super-smart and better-equipped scientist (played by Neil Casey) bent on paranormal mischief. "Rowan is the ultimate loner," says the director. "A regular New Yorker whose goal is to bring some things back to this world. He wants to trap ghosts, but for a different purpose..." And that's all Feig will reveal about this still very much locked-down plot point.

Overseeing the mayhem with his walking stick and carnation, he looks the picture of unflappability. "The man's ridiculous. It's sweltering hot and I've never seen one drop of sweat," marvels Amy Pascal, who resigned from Sony

amid the 2014 hacking scandal, and is here today in a producer capacity. But under the surface, Feig reveals in a quiet moment, he's paddling like a desperate duck.

"Each day I wake up thinking, 'Don't let this be the day I screw it up. Make sure you get enough stuff! Shoot it right! Get the right performances!' It's just the fear of, 'Is this the day it's not going to happen?'"

Six months later, Feig's

still got the fear. It's March 2016 and, with *Ghostbusters* well into post-production, he's at his office in Burbank, Los Angeles. Like its resident, Feigco is a mix of quirkiness and sophistication: there is a huge print of a £20 note by artist Paul Rousso ("I change it to a \$20 bill when I'm meeting an American," jokes Feig, an Anglophile) and a nameplate on the desk reads "Chief Business Gentleman".

Top: Secretary Kevin proves to Erin and Patty that he's not just a pretty face – he can order in takeaway too.

Above: Director Feig has a shot at brandishing a Proton Gun.



Above: Erin, Abby, Jillian and Patty discuss bustin' tactics.

Well into mixing the film's sound and approving its 1,600 or so visual-effects shots, the director looks relaxed enough. But he admits to still having jitters, no doubt increased by the pushback against the film, which has only intensified since marketing began. And in disturbing ways: "I had this guy send me a picture of a Nazi shooting a black woman in the head," reveals Leslie Jones. "I can't believe some of this stuff. It's just a movie. It's literally just a movie. We're not writing a true story about people killing ghosts, you know? *Minions* ain't real either!"

Feig remains stoic. "As much as I've been confronted with really terrible stuff, I've had encouragement too," he insists. "It all comes from a place of passion. I'm just trying to stay vigilant and make the right decision about a million things. The minute you relax, the chances of it going in the toilet are very high."

Only time will tell now whether *Ghostbusters* will be a hit that launches a thousand spin-offs, or whether a mob of misogynists is about to have its way. But nobody can accuse Feig of not giving it his all. Among his achievements — redesigning the Proton Packs (they're now synchrotron, not cyclotron, as we're sure you surmised from the photos); making Boston look like New York; directing Slimer — was landing the blessings of the original cast and crew. Reitman and Aykroyd, obviously, with the latter even contributing some lines of technical dialogue. Harold Ramis's wife and children, says Pascal, dropped by the set on two "super-emotional" days. And Aykroyd, Bill Murray, Sigourney Weaver and Ernie Hudson all agreed to do cameos, albeit not as their original characters.

"You just try not to vomit. I mostly succeeded in that," says McKinnon of shooting scenes with her comedy heroes.

"It was crazy, crazy, crazy." Even Chris Hemsworth, the mighty Thor, was thunderstruck: "I hadn't met Bill before. It was so cool to see it through his eyes and listen to him talk about how the outfits were similar or the packs were different."

It being Bill Murray, naturally, it nearly didn't happen. "My wife used to manage his brother Joel way back when," says Feig, "but we never actually crossed paths until the 40th anniversary party for *Saturday Night Live*. I mustered up the courage to go over to say hello, but when I mentioned the film he sort of said, 'Oh yeah,' and darted off. I was like, 'Oh no, I just blew my chance with Bill Murray.' We were hearing on the grapevine that he might show up, but until the day before we had no idea whether he would. He did. And it was really special." Feig may have intended this to be an origin story, but he's managed to make it a reunion show, too. A supernatural feat. ■



GHOSTBUSTERS
SPECIAL

The Ghost Writer

**Dan Aykroyd looks back on
his life as a Ghostbuster**

WORDS **DAN AYKROYD**







Ghostbusters was something I grew up with. Besides being a dentist, my great-grandfather Sam was a spiritualist and a researcher. He would visit all the psychic acts that came to Kingston, Ontario, and decide whether something was for real or a hoax. He had a live-in medium, named Walter Ashurst, to channel spirits in the old farmhouse where I still live in Canada. One time Ashurst crawled up on the chair, hunched over, gnarled his hands and began to speak in a German accent about physics and fission and atomic energy. A little research was done afterwards, and it was discovered that Dr. Charles Steinmetz, the famous inventor, used to crawl up on his chair like that when he worked.

It became a family business. My grandfather, a Bell telephone engineer, commissioned a sketch of a high-vibrating crystal that, if you built it, was theorised to be able to cut through to the fifth, sixth and seventh dimensions, wherever these spirits roam and come from. We'd visit my grandparents' house every summer while I was growing up, and instead of old *Life* and *Look* magazines lying around, there would be *American Society For Psychical Research* journals or essays by Albert Durrant Watson or Arthur Conan Doyle. So as an eight-year-old kid, I'm reading all this. The impressive thing was that all these people were serious inquirers, scientists going, "There's something here. There's a reason why you can look at 85 cards and someone's going to guess what 30 of them are."

My father, Peter, continued the tradition by writing the book *A History Of Ghosts*. And I am a firm believer, too. I've attended many séances — we had a great one the other night, with a medium who brought back names that meant something to my father, who is 94 now and with us in the house. She brought back the name of his cat, and I never even knew he had a cat! Another time, on one stormy evening, I ran out of the farmhouse because I saw three or four big, green, glowing S's, like snakes, at the top of the stairs. They were ectoplasmic tubes, maybe, marching across the stairs in the lightning. I just turned around and fled.



They weren't afraid of no ghost: Dr. Peter Venkman (Bill Murray), Dr. Raymond Stantz (Dan Aykroyd) and Dr. Egon Spengler (Harold Ramis).

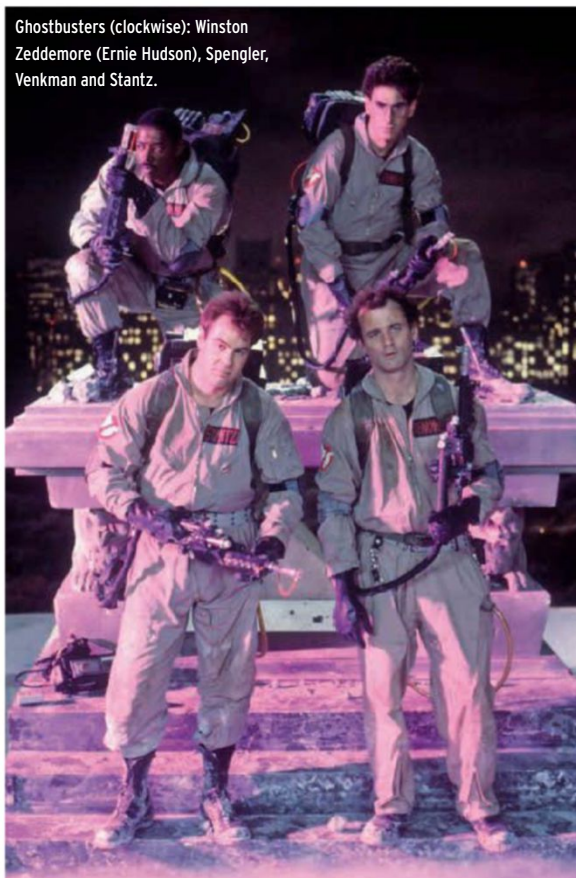
One day, shortly after

I'd left *Saturday Night Live* in 1979, I was reading about quantum physics and parapsychology. I started thinking about all those old ghost comedies by the Bowery Boys, Bob Hope, Abbott and Costello. Then it occurred to me: "If you marry up these two things, what would happen?"

The first draft of *Ghostbusters* was pretty wild. I went to a quarry and got a big hunk of granite, if you know what I mean. I threw it all in there, with full knowledge that I was writing something that was not going to be made in that form, but I was able to lay in so much of what became the first and second movies. Back then, it was going to be Eddie Murphy, myself, Belushi and Murray. The tone was much darker. Slimer wasn't so cute. One of the concepts I had was for the Ghostbusters to have an inter-dimensional interceptor, so they could go back and forth between dimensions. I have that idea in a working draft, and maybe it'll get made. We'll see...

Michael Ovitz, the agent, read it in the raw granite form and said, "This is going to be amazing. Let's get Ivan."

Ghostbusters (clockwise): Winston Zeddemore (Ernie Hudson), Spengler, Venkman and Stantz.





GHOSTBUSTERS SPECIAL



Sigourney Weaver as Dana Barrett on set, getting roughed up by the 'hands' of demonic spirit Zuul.

we buy this?" Three weeks later, Coca-Cola stocks were rocketing on the basis of the box-office returns for Columbia. The movie just *worked*.

I know Bill's said some

negative things about the sequel, but there are some tremendous sequences. The river of slime, Vigo, the whole baby thing, the possessed Ghostbusters... I'd say it holds up to the first movie about 75 per cent. If there's a deficiency, it's the ending — it's hard to follow up Mr. Stay Puft. But I consider it a great companion to the first movie. And it was a hit.

I wrote a third one, *Hellbent*, which oddly enough in the fog of the future is under consideration again — or parts of it. The villain was based on Donald Trump. I wanted Alec Baldwin to play him, the devil in a thousand-foot black onyx tower overlooking the hell-pit mine of Central Park. There's great stuff in it, but Bill wanted to move on to other things.

A while later, we did a few drafts based on the old Ghostbusters handing over the torch to a new group. It was fine, but the studio thought it lacked freshness. So the thing lay dormant for a while. To be honest, we were dead in the water. I had completely given up on it. And then along came Paul Feig.

I'm so happy it's worked out and that suddenly there are all kinds of new ideas for *Ghostbusters* movies bubbling up. It just took someone to reinvigorate it. And we thank Paul Feig for doing that. I'm going to work with Ivan to develop anything that comes along. I will act as a writer, a producer — that's how I'll keep my hand in. Ivan and I are in collaboration now in a new phase of our careers that frankly we did not anticipate.

Ghostbusters has never left my life. What I love is pulling up for signings at liquor stores for my Newfoundland-made, no-additive Crystal Head vodka, and seeing an Ectomobile or two. Or sometimes as many as 30 people kitted out as Ghostbusters, wearing everything from the slime pack to the dark jumpsuits — refinements you wouldn't believe. I always have them come up first, because the packs weigh about 45 kilos. And many have children with them, also dressed as Ghostbusters. There are three generations of fans now. It's become a perennial, like how I loved *Abbott And Costello Meet The Invisible Man* or *Ghost Chasers*. And with DVD, digital and streaming, the legacy will be there forever.

GHOSTBUSTERS IS OUT ON JULY 14 AND WILL BE REVIEWED IN A FUTURE ISSUE.



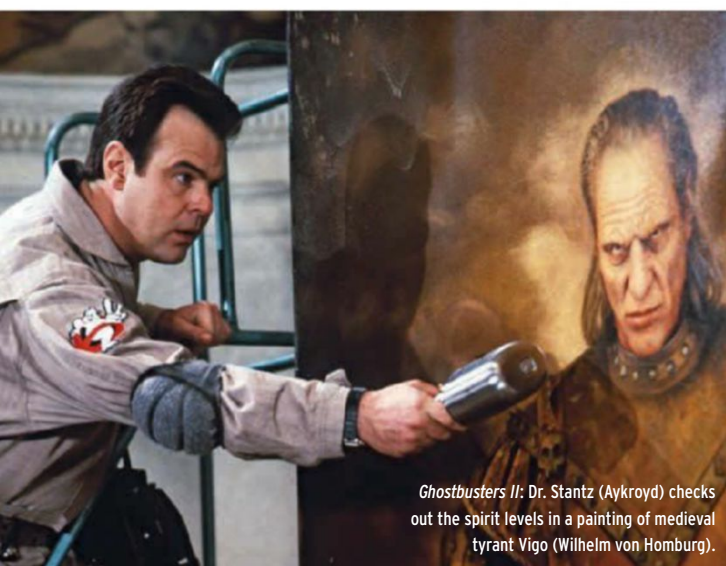
Mr. Stay Puft gets ready for his close-up.

Ivan [Reitman] read it, brought in Harold [Ramis] and within two or three weeks, the rewrite was underway.

You don't put the hunk of granite on the executive's desk. So away we went to sculpt. The three of us hammered out the script in Canada, in LA, in New York, all over. We spent two fun weeks at my place in the Vineyard. That house, which my daughters own now, is up on a hill with a beautiful, 272-degree view of the ocean. But we buried ourselves in the basement for eight hours a day, coming out blinking like moles.

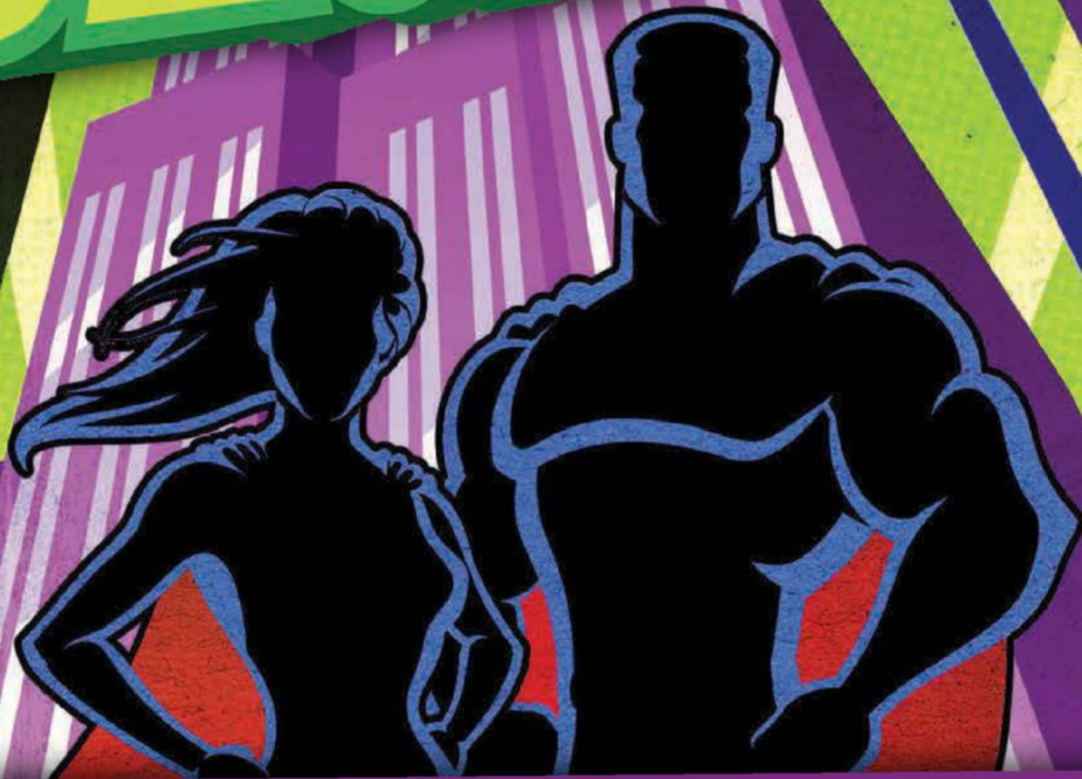
We were writing the part of Venkman for Murray, but we knew the bigger challenge was getting Bill to a) read the material, and b) show up to work. On the first day we really had no idea if he was going to appear. But he did, and the shoot was pure pleasure. The biggest joy was taking over New York, just watching the people in the city react when we were driving about in the Ecto-1 and walking about with the packs, coming out of public places... I loved stealing footage — Ivan would just set up a camera and we'd walk down Fifth Avenue. There we were, the four of us, Harold, Ernie and me and Billy, going to work. It was a great time. I owned Chicago once, with *The Blues Brothers*, and on the *Ghostbusters* movies I owned New York.

I knew we were making something people would come to see, like they came to *Animal House* and *Stripes*. I knew it would open. But I didn't know it would stay at the US box-office number-one slot for 13 weeks. It was like we'd hit a gusher in the oil business. Roberto Goizueta, the brilliant Cuban entrepreneur who was CEO of Coke and took over Columbia Pictures, saw the movie and hated it. He said, "Why did



Ghostbusters II: Dr. Stantz (Aykroyd) checks out the spirit levels in a painting of medieval tyrant Vigo (Wilhelm von Homburg).

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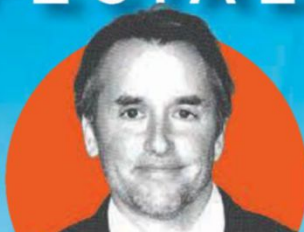


EMPIRE DIRECTOR

SPECIAL FEATURE



SHANE BLACK



RICHARD LINKLATER



DON CHEADLE

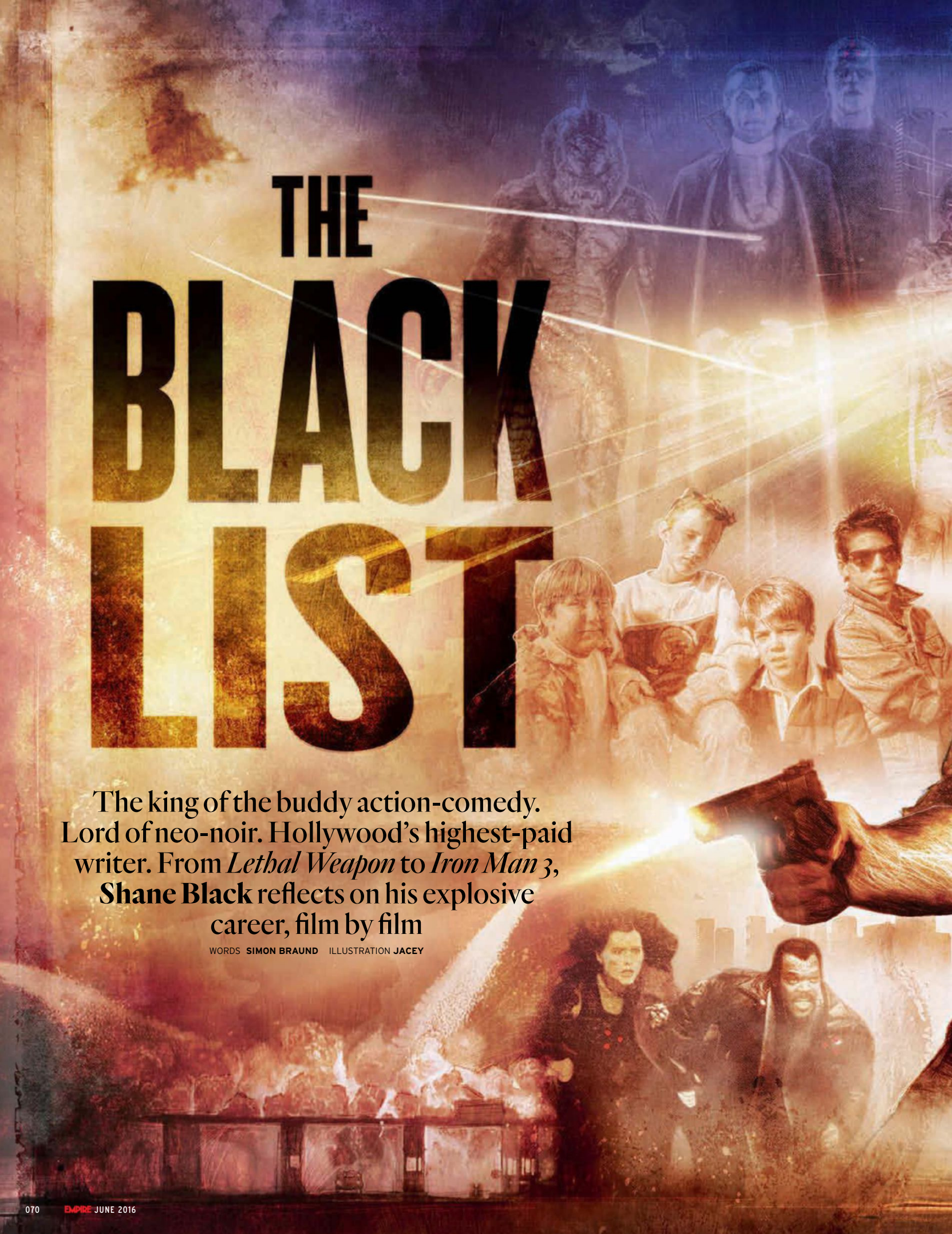


JODIE FOSTER

Empire talks exclusively with the directors of four of this month's most anticipated movies. Action! ➤

DIRECTOR





THE BLACK LIST

The king of the buddy action-comedy. Lord of neo-noir. Hollywood's highest-paid writer. From *Lethal Weapon* to *Iron Man 3*, **Shane Black** reflects on his explosive career, film by film

WORDS SIMON BRAUND ILLUSTRATION JACEY





DIRECTORS SPECIAL SHANE BLACK

"I CALL THIS THE TORTURE PIT"

Shane Black has invited *Empire* to his LA home, an elegant townhouse in the old-money neighbourhood of Hancock Park, and led us past bookshelf after bookshelf of detective novels (from Chandler and Hammett to the lowliest pulps) to the very spot where he now works on his scripts; a fitting place, he feels, for us to discuss them. Fortunately, it doesn't look at all torturous: a pair of deep velvet couches face each other across a sturdy, wooden coffee table. But Black, the man who gave us *Lethal Weapon*, *The Last Boy Scout* and *Iron Man 3*, takes the business of screenwriting very seriously — and has done for most of his life, with incredible success.

Black was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in December 1961 and as a child was not merely an avid reader but an insatiable one, often going without lunch to save money for the latest Ed McBain or Warren Murphy. He also had a passion for writing, but gave little thought to making a career of it. Then, while he was in high school, the Black family relocated to California, where he would go on to enrol at UCLA to study film and theatre. He continued to write, concentrating on screenplays. A roommate at the time, Fred Dekker, also a writer, was happy to give his friend's scripts to his agent to pass around. One of those was an offbeat buddy-cop movie called *Lethal Weapon*. It caught the eye of 48 Hrs. producer Joel Silver — who pops up like a bearded fairy godmother throughout Black's career — and in early 1985, Silver persuaded Warner Bros. to buy it for \$250,000. Black was 23 at the time.

LETHAL WEAPON (1987)

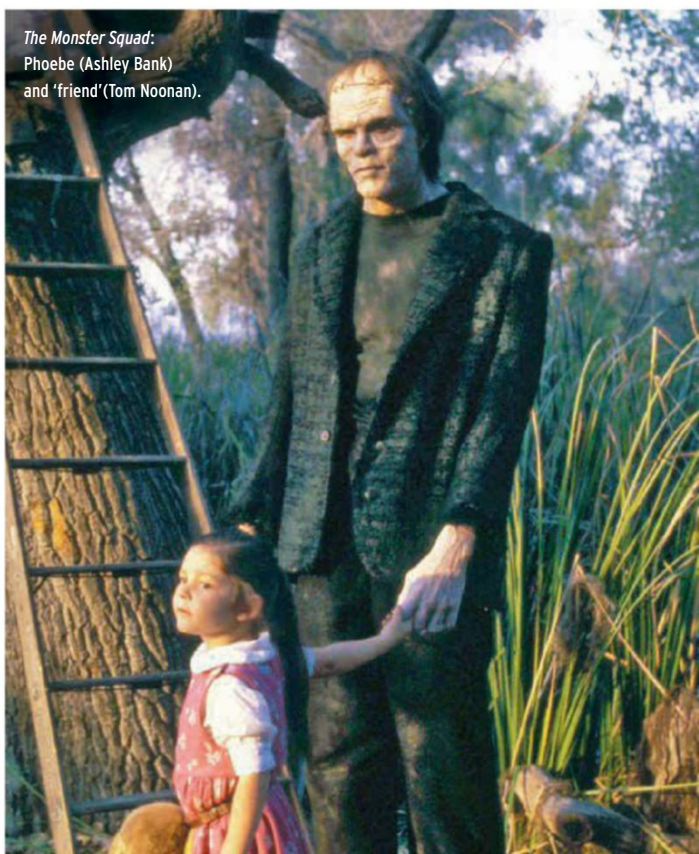
A blend of action-thriller, character drama and black comedy, in which LAPD vet Roger Murtaugh (Danny Glover) is reluctantly teamed with suicidal maverick Martin Riggs (Mel Gibson), *Lethal Weapon* announced Black as a prodigious new talent. He drew on a number of influences for a debut which proved a potent taste of things to come. "I'd always been a fan of noir cop thrillers," he says. "They used to show heavily edited movies after Monday Night Football and I'd watch them on our tiny little TV set."

It was in this shrunken form that Black first encountered Don Siegel's *Dirty Harry*. "I was transfixed," he says. "The humour in *Lethal Weapon* all came from *Dirty Harry*." Western mythology also played a part, specifically the gentrification of the West and the gunslinger's increasing redundancy. "*Lethal Weapon* to me," he says, "is about this figure who comes back from the war damaged, who did things he's not particularly proud of and who is then reviled for them. Society's attitude is: 'We're safe now, and you're a monster.' But he knows the West is not gentrified, the evil is coming back. And when it does, they need the old gunslinger. They will have to let the monster out of his cage."

Lethal Weapon was itself a monster. Earning a cool \$65 million just from its initial US release, it ushered in a whole new era of smart, self-aware action movies and launched Black's remarkable career trajectory.



The Monster Squad:
Phoebe (Ashley Bank)
and 'friend' (Tom Noonan).





Aim and fire: maverick young cop Martin Riggs (Mel Gibson) gets to grips with his lethal weapon.

Black, bluntly. Significantly, he has not strayed far from the crime genre since. Although, soon after, he was surprised to find himself struggling in that area, too.

THE LAST BOY SCOUT

(1991)

According to legend, Black backed out of *Lethal Weapon 2* because he'd originally wanted Riggs to die at the end of the first film. "That was only part of it," he says. He did turn in a draft of the sequel, but, "the mandate came down from the studio: 'More comedy.' I didn't want to do that. I *couldn't* do that." The film was rewritten by Jeffrey Boam; Black, who received 'story' and 'characters' credits, turned his attention to *The Last Boy Scout*, another mismatched buddy movie in which a washed-up secret service agent (Bruce Willis) teams up with a disgraced football star (Damon Wayans) to bust a gambling syndicate.

It was a notoriously troubled project. Joel Silver described it as "one of the three worst experiences of my life", while director Tony Scott claimed Willis hijacked the movie, demanding extensive re-writes from Black on pain of his being fired.

"I don't think that's what really happened," says Black. "They were facing tremendous pressure from the studio to have this be a follow-up to *Die Hard*. Bruce wasn't happy, and I was under pressure to make the movie bigger. There was no mention in my original script of a giant football stadium or riding a horse onto the field in the middle of a game. It's an odd mix, and I think what works best is not the bravura action but scenes like the one where Bruce asks the guy for a cigarette, then punches and kills him."

Despite the strain and the curate's egg that resulted, *The Last Boy Scout* did leave Black with fond memories of the late, great Tony Scott. "One of my favourite people," he says. "Endlessly inspirational. A young writer once went to him and said, 'I just came from the studio, they're fucking with my movie, they're bringing in another guy, they're taking the money away. I'm fighting like crazy.' Tony looked at him and said, 'Yeah. It's great isn't it?'"

Scott later admitted that Black's original *Boy Scout* script, a taut neo-noir packed with wise-ass dialogue and bone-cracking violence, was better than the movie he made of it. He was being



Jimmy Dix (Damon Wayans) and Joe Hallenback (Bruce Willis) in *The Last Boy Scout*.

THE MONSTER SQUAD

(1987)

The golden boy after *Lethal Weapon*, Black was given free rein, and rather than follow up with another buddy-cop movie, he elected to revive this *Goonies*-style kids' caper he and Fred Dekker had written in the early '80s. Featuring Frankenstein's Monster, Dracula and The Mummy, it was inspired by one of Black's favourite movies: *Abbott And Costello Meet Frankenstein*. "The reason being," he says, "is that they are as funny as ever, but the menace is played straight. Basically, we wanted to do *Our Gang* [a bunch of mischievous scamps created by Hal Roach], and play the horror for real."

Though it now enjoys an afterlife on the midnight movie circuit, *Monster Squad* didn't scare up much business on its release, earning less than \$4 million in the US. Neither was it a hit with critics ("Neither scary nor funny," was *TV Guide's* verdict) "It was a bomb," says



DIRECTORS SPECIAL SHANE BLACK

generous. What hurt *The Last Boy Scout*, which was a hit but not a big one, was Hollywood's inexplicable habit of paying top dollar for a script (\$1.75 million in this case) then mutilating everything that made it attractive in the first place. It's a practice that still baffles Black. "They paid me a lot of money for *Boy Scout*," he says. "And I did more rewrites on it than any other movie I've ever done. The studio just wanted it to fit a marketing template they'd already established. They wanted another *Die Hard*. It's not a bad movie, but it is the movie that made me decide I should direct someday."

That ambition, magnificently realised down the line, had to wait, as Black embarked on what he reasoned would surely be the biggest movie of his career so far.

LAST ACTION HERO (1993)

Extremely Violent, a cool, R-rated pastiche of high-octane '80s action movies, sadly ended up as the bloated, tone-deaf PG-13 cop-out that was *Last Action Hero*. Unlike *Lethal Weapon 2*, it was Black who was doing the rewriting.

"When I came in, there was a script by Zak Penn and Adam Leff," says Black. "I liked the premise [*young film fan is transported to the world of his favourite star's latest movie*], but I thought it was small in scope. Our first draft, everyone loved. Arnold [Schwarzenegger] said it was one of the best scripts he'd ever read."

Director John McTiernan loved it too, but still made extensive changes, amends that, in Black's view, dragged the movie down and blunted its comic edge. "It became more heady," he says, "kind of pretentious rather than the comedy it needed to be. I'm not saying we [*he and co-writer David Arnott*] could've saved it, but we spent a lot of time making it funny and none of the jokes made it in. We were fired after an argument with John. Then Carrie Fisher did a pass because the studio wanted a woman's perspective. William Goldman did two drafts; the joke was that the producer's gardener did a draft. Zak blames me for everything. To this day he cites all the things he hates about it. What he doesn't understand is that I didn't like them either."

The project's cardinal sin, according to Black, was its insufferable smugness. "There was a theatrical trailer where



Arnold Schwarzenegger
as Jack Slater
in *Last Action Hero*.



The Long Kiss Goodnight:
Geena Davis teams up
with Samuel L. Jackson.

you see some action and then Arnold comes on and says, 'Not yet!' and shuts the door on the audience. I remember thinking, 'Boy, this better play.'" It didn't, and was famously savaged both by critics, and at the box office by *Jurassic Park*.

Beneath all the bombast of *Last Boy Scout*, there is clearly a Shane Black movie struggling to get out. *Last Action Hero*, on the other hand, bears not a trace of his signature style. His next project was to be a different matter entirely.

THE LONG KISS GOODNIGHT (1996)

A noirish action-thriller starring Geena Davis as an amnesiac schoolteacher whose past life as a trained assassin comes flooding back after a concussion, this crackles with Black's primary influences: private-eye novels, crime fiction and spy movies. It earned Black

\$4 million, a record-breaking figure for a spec script.

Like *The Last Boy Scout*, *The Long Kiss Goodnight* would attract a cult following, but when it tanked in the States on release (only grossing \$33 million), the backlash was vicious and Black took the brunt of it. "Black has not only exploited the system, he has laid it to waste," wrote *Variety* editor Peter Bart in a scathing article. "I was painted as epitomising everything crass and over-indulgent about Hollywood," says Black.

Stung by the personal attacks and becoming jaded with the action genre, Black took a sabbatical. "I was in the spotlight," he says. "And it was all about the money. I didn't *care* about the money. I just wanted to tell stories, be a better writer, try new things. And I wanted out of the spotlight." He got what he wanted. Black disappeared, becoming "invisible", as he puts it, for nine years — time he says that "went by in a blur". He resurfaced to a changed world. Four million-dollar paychecks were a thing of the past, and the days when executives read his scripts by invitation only were long gone.



Two-bit crook Harry Lockhart (Robert Downey Jr.) gets a hand in *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang*.

KISS KISS BANG BANG

(2005)

He might have been invisible for those nine years, but Black was not entirely idle. In the spirit of trying new things, he began writing a romantic comedy. The first 40 pages had promise, he recalls, but then it meandered into darker territory. Black's friend, writer-director James L. Brooks (*Terms Of Endearment*, *As Good As It Gets*) advised him that it was going wildly astray. "I was crushed," says Black, "but I didn't want to give in. Then I was talking to Jim one night about how much we both love *Chinatown* and I thought, 'I bet I can finish this if I make it a murder mystery.' I added a detective, Gay Perry, and a series of murders and *voilà*. Cut to no-one wanting it."

The difficulty Black had peddling *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang* was not only due to his prolonged hiatus. Convinced only *he* could handle the material's hyperactive comedy-action-drama mix, and tired of ceding control of scripts he'd slaved over to others, he was determined to direct it himself.

"Doors slammed all over town," he says. "In the end, I took it to Joel [Silver], who loved it and supported me as director." Even with Silver's weight behind it, it took a further year-and-a-half before Warner Bros. agreed to fund the project for \$15 million, a pittance compared to previous Black projects. Luckily, for such a trifling sum, Warner Bros. was happy for Black to take the reins.

What emerged was a serpentine, tongue-in-cheek crime-comedy featuring an inspired double act from Robert Downey Jr. and Val Kilmer as, respectively, a crook-turned-actor and a gay private eye embroiled in a murder case. It not only marked Black's triumphant return, but also a new phase in his career. Every script he's written since, he's also been attached to as director.

"I wish I could say it was difficult," he says on directing for the first time. "But it was fantastic; Val and Downey just clicked. Nothing to do with me. You give Downey a playground, he'll elevate your material to a point where you're claiming credit for things you never dreamed of. And Joel guided me every step of the way; my only thought was, 'I hope I get another shot because this one was a blast.'"

Since *Kiss Kiss* also helped put Downey Jr. back in the ring after his 2001 incarceration on drugs charges, that ➤



DIRECTORS SPECIAL SHANE BLACK

was in the stars. Still, despite the film proving a critical and commercial hit that earned a standing ovation at Cannes, Black seemed to retreat from the spotlight once again. He began work on a script for *Doc Savage*, based on the Depression-era comic books he'd loved as a kid, and, as he puts it, "futzed around". But when he did return, it was with another bang.

IRON MAN 3 (2013)

"I get a call in the middle of the night. It's Downey Jr. 'Are you in town? Sit down, I have something for you.'" Black knew immediately that the something was *Iron Man 3*.

"I think it's the only superhero movie I would've considered doing," he says, pondering his first foray into full-on blockbuster territory, a significant move, given how highly he prizes control of his own material. "I looked at the first *Iron Man* and it occurred to me that it was very different from, say, *Thor*. I saw *Iron Man 3* as more of a Tom Clancy thriller; that was my stamp, making it into a thriller. We went to Marvel and they said, 'Okay, but we're pairing you with another writer.' I was like, 'Are you fucking kidding me?' But then when I met Drew Pearce we got on like a house on fire. We shaped the movie together, and I give him credit for most of the hilarious dialogue."

But Black still had concerns about his creative freedom, and knocked heads with Marvel Studios boss and *Iron Man* producer Kevin Feige. "Marvel are very four-quadrant," he says (i.e. they tailor their movies carefully to a global market). "You can step outside the box, but not a lot. You can take risks, but you can't take too many. In retrospect, I clashed with Kevin more out of hubris than anything. He's a very smart guy. Joss Whedon came to me halfway through and said, 'There's a point where you have to trust the machine. This doesn't look like a processed movie, your voice is there. Now trust the machine.' After that, I started to listen to Kevin more and the collaboration became easier. And I was really pleased with the movie, which is what matters."

Raking in almost one-and-a-quarter billion dollars worldwide, *Iron Man 3* rocketed Black right back to the top of the A-list, allowing him to resurrect another personal project that had been gathering dust for years.



Nice Guys Russell Crowe and Ryan Gosling in Shane Black's latest release.



Shane Black with Robert Downey Jr. on the set of *Iron Man 3*.

THE NICE GUYS (2016)

Originally written in 2001, this '70s-set crime caper — “The spiritual sequel to *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang*” — is the longest in the making of any of Black’s movies. Over the years it was variously mooted as a CBS TV pilot, an HBO series and a vehicle for Sean Penn (“He wanted too much money,” says Black).

Presumed dead and buried, it was given a new lease of life when a New Line exec casually enquired about it during a meeting for a *Long Kiss Goodnight* sequel. “People were talking about it again,” says Black. “I get a call from an agent: ‘How about Russell Crowe for this?’ I said, ‘Get me on a plane, I’ll go talk to him.’ That was a Thursday; I was leaving Monday. On Saturday I get a call from another agent: ‘Ryan Gosling wants to do it.’ After 10 years, the entire movie came together in four or five days.”

Featuring Crowe and Gosling as tough-talking detectives investigating the suicide of a porn star, *The Nice Guys* is,

says Black, in tune with the classics of the genre: *Hickey & Boggs*, *Thunderbolt And Lightfoot*, “Even the *Pink Panther* movies,” he says. “But the good ones where the bad guys were played for real.”

Another double-header, *The Nice Guys* is also heavily dependent on the chemistry between its A-list leads. “You hear rumours. ‘These guys are tough.’ But again, it was a blast,” says Black. “Crowe is a sweetheart and Gosling is a true gentleman. I studied acting so I know how to talk to these guys; I know their vocabulary. But chemistry isn’t about going for drinks after work, it’s about the magic that happens when two pros get together on a set. I’ve never had a more pleasant experience. And, as you might’ve noticed, I’ve done a few buddy movies.” We have, and there’s no doubt that chemistry is something Black has mastered over the past 30 years, whether on the page or on the set. Even if it has been torture.

THE NICE GUYS IS OUT NOW AND IS REVIEWED ON PAGE 30.

BET ON BLACK

MATCH THE SHANE BLACK ZINGER TO THE FILM...

1. “SHIT, WE’RE BEIN’ BEAT UP BY THE INVENTOR OF SCRABBLE.”
2. “EVERYONE KNOWS, WHEN YOU MAKE AN ASSUMPTION, YOU MAKE AN ASS OUT OF ‘U’ AND ‘UMPTION’.”
3. “I LOVED YOU IN A *CHRISTMAS STORY*, BY THE WAY.”
4. “YEAH, YEAH SURE. ALL DRESSED UP AND NO-ONE TO BLOW.”
5. “DON’T WORRY, I SAW *LORD OF THE RINGS*. I’M NOT GOING TO END THIS 17 TIMES.”



A. LETHAL WEAPON



B. THE LAST BOY SCOUT



C. KISS KISS BANG BANG



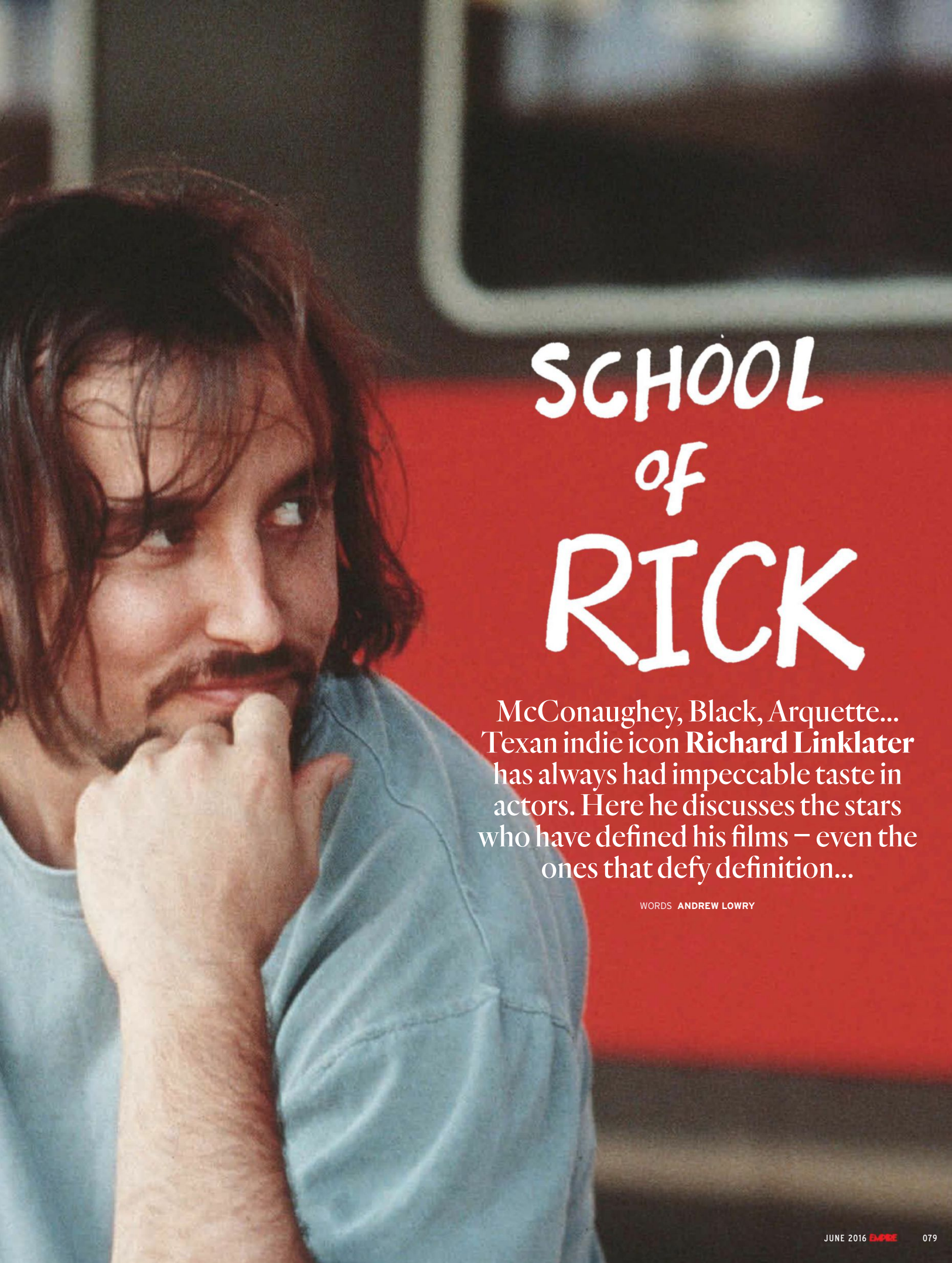
D. THE LONG KISS GOODNIGHT



E. IRON MAN 3

QUIZ ANSWERS: 1B, 2D, 3E, 4A, 5C



A portrait of Richard Linklater, a man with long brown hair and a beard, resting his chin on his hand and looking thoughtfully to the side. He is wearing a light blue t-shirt. The background is a blurred red wall.

SCHOOL of RICK

McConaughey, Black, Arquette... Texan indie icon **Richard Linklater** has always had impeccable taste in actors. Here he discusses the stars who have defined his films – even the ones that defy definition...

WORDS ANDREW LOWRY



DIRECTORS SPECIAL RICHARD LINKLATER

IF YOU'RE LOOKING for common threads in Richard Linklater's incredibly diverse body of work, you're not making it home before dark. From the amiable indie hangouts (*Dazed And Confused*, new film *Everybody Wants Some!!*) to the rotoscoped

experiments (*Waking Life*, *A Scanner Darkly*) by way of the studio comedies (*School Of Rock*, *Bad News Bears*) and the unexpected tangents (*Fast Food Nation*, *Me And Orson Welles*), you'll need quite a roadmap if you're looking to take the whole lot in. And that's without even mentioning the meditations on time, love and a whole lot else on which his reputation rests: *Boyhood*, and *Before Sunset*, *Sunrise* and *Midnight*.

Linklater's been kind enough to offer you a few guides, though, working with the same rotating company of actors, time and again. "You find an actor who's right for the part," he says, "and if you've already worked together, you have a shorthand. When you've built up that bond, you can really have somebody on board as a collaborator, instead of just an actor you hire. I love that — you need all the ideas you can get, so why not surround yourself with the smartest people?"

This year's *Everybody Wants Some!!* confirms him as one of the best handlers of actors around. Among his cast of young unknowns, who play members of a college baseball team in turn-of-the-'80s Texas, there's not a single weak link. Whether they're already stars, future stars, or just people he found on the street, Linklater's taste in actors is second to none.

THE KING OF TEXAS

MATTHEW McCONAUGHEY

Dazed And Confused (1993), *The Newton Boys* (1998), *Bernie* (2011)

The story of Matthew McConaughey's casting in *Dazed And Confused* is semi-legendary: the casting director met him in a bar, suggested he come in the next day to read for the part of horndog Wooderson, and a thousand "Alrights" were born.

Too good to be true? Kind of: Linklater is keen to stress he didn't magic McConaughey from the ether. "The thing is," he says, "Matthew was always going



Matthew McConaughey's memorable performance as the 'older' Wooderson in *Dazed And Confused*.



As gun-wielding bank robber Willis Newton in *The Newton Boys*.

Below: As District Attorney Danny Buck in black comedy *Bernie*.



"TOTALLY ILLOGICAL"



THE ONE WHO WALKED AWAY

WILEY WIGGINS

Dazed And Confused (1993), *Waking Life* (2001)

A fair number of *Dazed* alumni went on to big things — aside from McConaughey, Ben Affleck and Milla Jovovich both went on to stopped-in-the-street levels of fame — but there's one name that stands out among the leads as having almost totally walked away from movies. And what a name: "As soon as Wiley came in," says Linklater, who cast him in the central role of Mitch, "he didn't know it, but I already wanted him because of his awesome name."

Wiley Wiggins has dabbled in acting since his charming turn in *Dazed* — most recently in Andrew Bujalski's fantastic *Computer Chess* (2013) — but never took it as seriously as some of his more ambitious peers, and is now a respected blogger on tech, computers and their legal and cultural impact. "He's driven in different ways," says Linklater. "He's a really cerebral guy. He used to blow my mind — he was so ahead of the curve on digital culture, even back then. I learned a lot from him."

In an industry where everybody daydreams about their Oscar acceptance speech, Wiggins's lack of interest in fame is pretty refreshing. "After *Dazed*, Wiley was offered every bad summer-camp movie going," says Linklater, "and he would just flat-out say to me, 'I'm not going to do that bullshit.' I would say, 'Wiley, man, you're 16 and it's \$100,000, if the film sucks it isn't on you,' but it wasn't for him."

Linklater was eventually able to lure Wiggins back, though, for his pioneering and philosophical *Waking Life*, where real footage was rotoscoped to create a woozy, disorientating feel for a series of vignettes ranging from the absurd to the profound.

"We did *Waking Life* about seven years later, and I didn't think of anybody else for the part. I just had to tell him I was making this really weird movie, and he just got it — he's a super well-read guy, and he could click into what we were going for, no problem. He's a computer guy, and he went on to work on one of the animation teams as well. I think that might be a world first, an actor working on animating himself." ➤

to be Matthew. I gave him a jumpstart, but that kind of star quality was always going to out. It was a classic case of preparation meeting opportunity."

Unlike a lot of McConaughey defenders worried he'd been lost forever to movies whose posters saw him leaning against Kate Hudson, Linklater wasn't surprised by the McConaissance, which saw the star emerge from years in romcoms to win an Oscar (for *Dallas Buyers Club*). "What Matthew brings to the table is that he was a film major from the get go — the only one in his fraternity — so he was always thinking in terms of storytelling. He's a filmmaker at heart, but he found his channel to telling stories through playing these characters. He'll think deeply about his part not just in terms of character, but in the function in the wider story, and not a lot of actors do that."

It's one thing to know how to make a movie, and to know film history, but McConaughey's not the sort to content himself with a Brando or De Niro impression and knock off at five.

"Matthew knows movies backwards, but he's not about referencing or imitating these great actors of the past. What he'll do is look at people in life, whether it's his dad or older brother or the guy he sits next to on a plane, and make them his reference points. He's always studying people; you can see him do it. That's why he was so perfect in *Bernie*. He's lived in East Texas. It's its own little world, and he understood that instinctively. There was no shortage of crazy characters for him to get his teeth into, and you can still see it in his work today. The East Texas thing was definitely something we bonded over."

"Cerebral" Wiley Wiggins as Mitch in *Dazed And Confused*.



DIRECTORS SPECIAL RICHARD LINKLATER



Ethan Hawke with Patricia Arquette and Ashley Johnson in *Fast Food Nation*.

Below right: Linklater on location with Hawke and Julie Delpy for *Before Sunrise*.

THE RENAISSANCE MAN

ETHAN HAWKE

Before Sunrise (1995), *The Newton Boys* (1998), *Waking Life* (2001), *Tape* (2001), *Before Sunset* (2004), *Fast Food Nation* (2006), *Before Midnight* (2013), *Boyhood* (2014)

Ethan Hawke and Linklater first met more than two decades ago, and their working relationship has lasted right up to last year's Oscars (for *Boyhood*), and is likely to go beyond. "I had no idea in 1994 that we would end up doing so many things together," says Linklater. "Not that I'm complaining."

As with McConaughey, it was a relationship that started almost by chance: Linklater met Hawke when he was in a play with *Dazed* cast member Anthony Rapp. "Ethan was this 23-year-old guy, and it was his theatre company. He just had, and has, this creative energy that's incredible. He was painting, he was writing songs, he'd written a novel, and the summer we were in Vienna for *Sunrise* he'd directed the biggest music video around [for Lisa Loeb's *Stay (I Missed You)*]. I was looking for the smartest, most creative, articulate guy [for the part of *American-abroad Jesse*], and I was lucky to find Ethan. We started talking, and we haven't stopped."

Longevity isn't just what stands out about Linklater and Hawke's relationship. In many ways, time is what they've both been examining, whether by accident in the *Before* trilogy, or by design in *Boyhood*. For *Before Sunset* and *Before Midnight*, Hawke and co-star Julie Delpy both moved up to become writers, and the films are as much about the actors considering life's milestones as they are about their on-screen avatars having a chinwag.

Hawke, Linklater insists, is still the same guy as the kid Linklater first worked with. "He's had the ups and downs we all have, it's come out of him in interesting ways. A lot of our films have had that idea underpinning them, and who better to do them with than Ethan, who's always thinking about the way time has a bearing on all of us? He knows the difference between something that's pretty good and something that's really good, and how hard to work to bridge that gap."

THE SUCKER PUNCH

PATRICIA ARQUETTE

Fast Food Nation (2006), *Boyhood* (2014)

Patricia Arquette may not have appeared in as many Linklater films as Hawke or McConaughey (or, indeed, Julie Delpy), but with *Boyhood* being shot in 12



Star turn: Patricia Arquette as Olivia in her Oscar-winning performance in *Boyhood*.

Above right: Jack Black throws the horns as music teacher Dewey Finn in *School Of Rock*.





chunks over as many years, that's a longer relationship than most Hollywood marriages. And most marriages don't result in an Oscar.

"Patricia is so real and instinctual," he says. "She's like the mom of the world to me: if there's an earthquake in Haiti, she'll go to Haiti to help. I knew she had been a mom early in her life, and we were both interested in exploring motherhood in a way that hadn't really been done on film before."

For many of the *Boyhood* shoots, Arquette was juggling Linklater's film with a lead role on *Medium*, and US TV shows aren't known for their generous schedules. But it wasn't tough for her to switch back into *Boyhood* mode.

"Consistency wasn't the hardest part for Patricia at all. She has this thing a lot of actors have where once a character is established, they can slip back into it any time. Say you run into an old friend you haven't seen for years, and in seconds it's like all that time melts away and you pick up the conversation. We wouldn't talk for six, eight months, then we would work very intensely over the phone. We'd talk about everything, from what furniture her character could afford in a given year, to whether or not this was what we called a 'recovery' year, where she was processing what had happened to her."

Arquette is the key player in *Boyhood*'s signature scene, where her son (Ellar Coltrane) is leaving for college and the weight of life's disappointments seems close to crushing her — but the strength is still there. It's a devastating performance. "That was the last scene we shot with Patricia," says Linklater, "and I barely had to say anything. It wasn't just her character saying goodbye to her son, it was her saying goodbye to these 12 years of working together. It's the biggest emotional moment of the film, and could have been melodramatic, but she doesn't overplay a second. We worked on tiny things, little details and tonal things to get right, but that scene's all Patricia. I was just, 'Wow...'"

THE REAL DEAL JACK BLACK

School Of Rock (2003), *Bernie* (2011)

Linklater's two films with Jack Black have given the actor two fantastic opportunities: *School Of Rock*'s Dewey Finn was a key part in establishing Black's wild, brash on-screen persona; then eight years later, the title character in true-life black comedy *Bernie* did interesting, unexpected things with it.

Surprisingly, it sounds like the ebullient Black needed some reassurance on the set of *School Of Rock*. "He would come up to me and ask, 'Hey, is this funny?' I had to keep telling him we were okay. It's just that my approach to comedy is very precise, and I think Jack's is, too. It's not about just entertaining the people there on set. We worked together by deciding *how* it was going to be funny — not just throwing a bunch of shit at the wall and seeing what sticks."

In *Bernie*, Black kept his rock-god soul suppressed to deliver the performance of his career as a small-town mortician emotionally abused by a wealthy widow. It's a contained, sweet performance, as a meek man whose community likes him enough to back him in a murder trial.

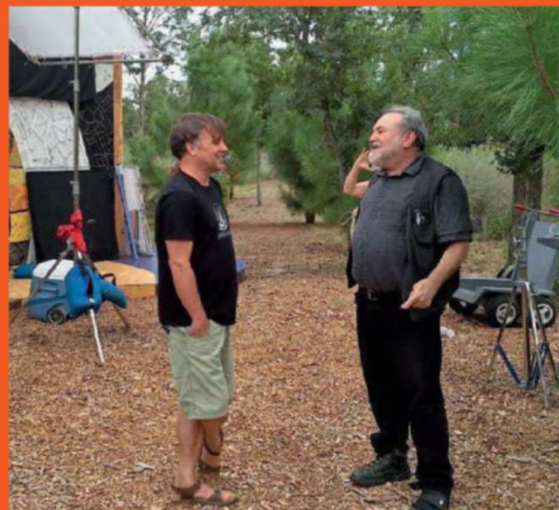
"It was a very scary part for him to take on," says Linklater. "We talked about using the part of himself that wants to be liked too much. With a guy who can go big like Jack can, you get interesting things when you get him to repress it, not least because people are familiar with how big he has it in him to go. Jack's the real deal, man: we had to get so detailed in his performance as Bernie, and he went with it all the way. It's a shame more people didn't see it."

It's a shame indeed: Black has since then retreated to his comedy wheelhouse, and it's likely to be a while before we get another *Bernie* out of him.

**EVERYBODY WANTS SOME!! IS OUT ON JUNE 23
AND IS REVIEWED ON PAGE 33.**

"HE JUST HAS IT," IN HIS BLOOD

**LOUIS BLACK, FOUNDER OF THE SXSW
FESTIVAL, ON WHY LINKLATER WAS THE
PERFECT SUBJECT FOR HIS LATEST
DOCUMENTARY FEATURE**



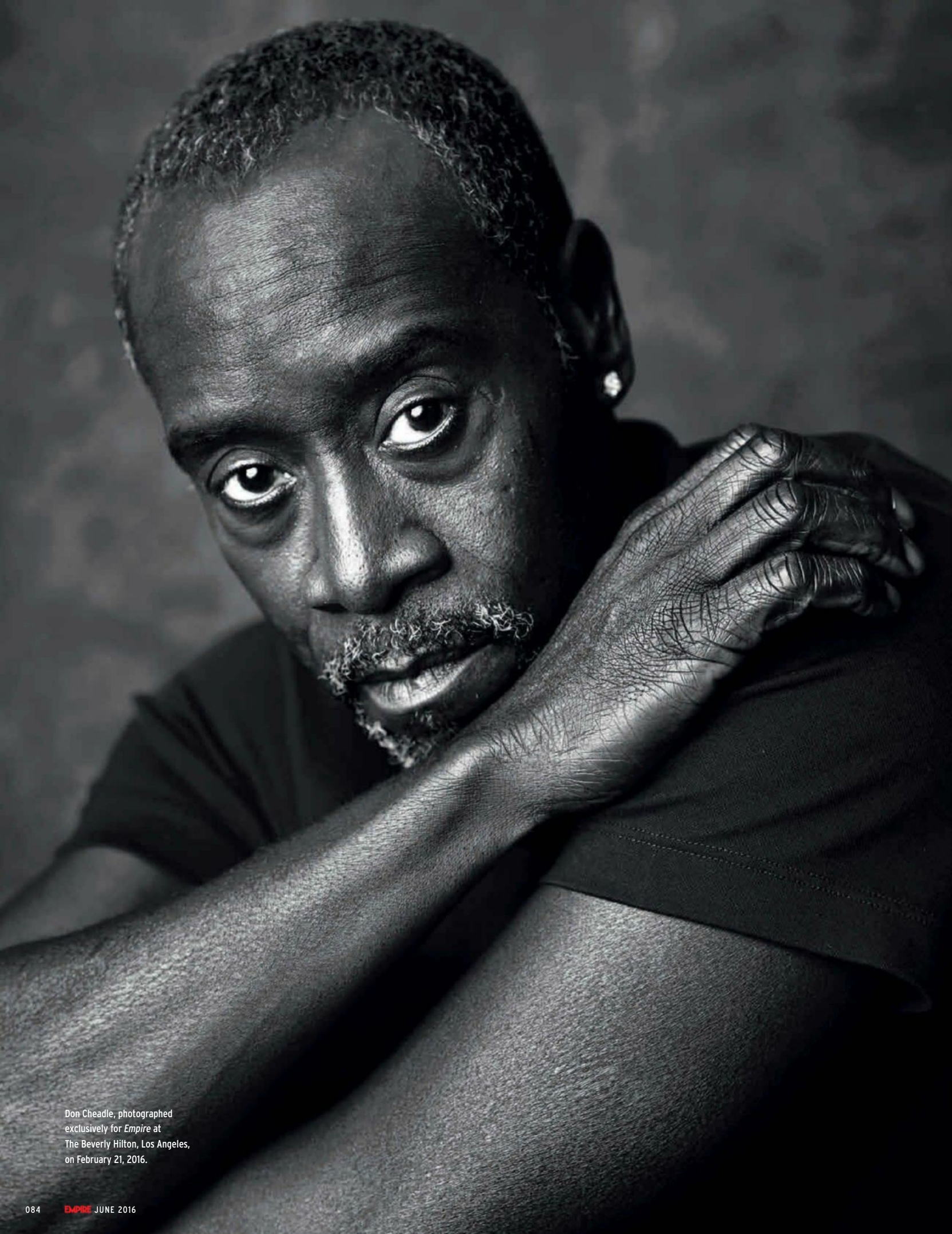
→ Louis Black has known Richard (or Rick, to his friends) Linklater for nigh-on 30 years, even appearing in 1991's *Slacker*, and is set to release *Dream Is Destiny*, an exhaustive documentary portrait of Linklater, his career and working methods.

"I first interviewed him for public access TV in Austin when he was making *Slacker*, and even then he was confident in himself as a director," he says. "Not in an arrogant way, but he just has it in his blood. If you look at those early films running up to *Dazed And Confused*, the learning curve is amazing — he found his feet in no time."

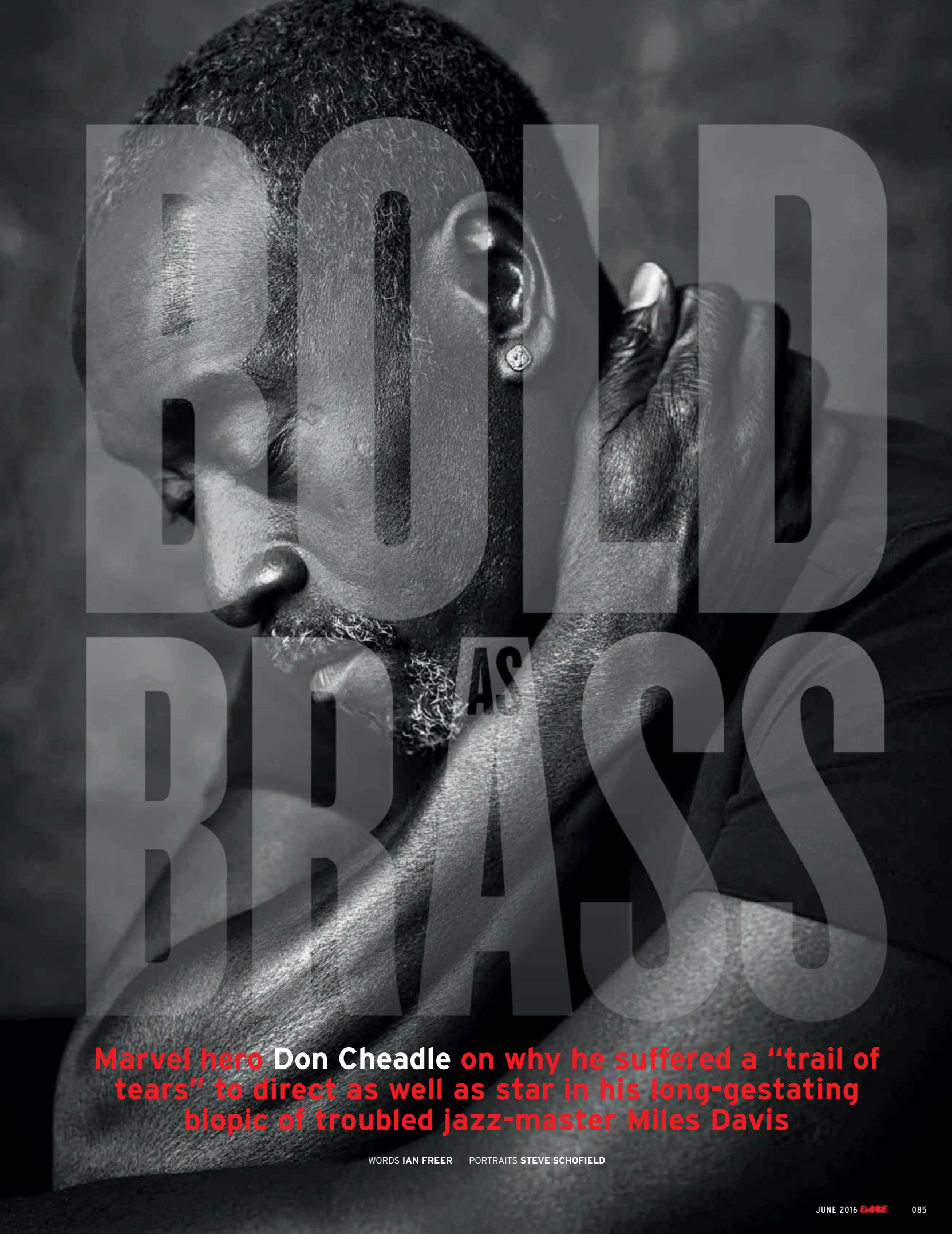
Linklater has always been an outlier of the '90s indie generation: he's a bit older than most of his peers, and not for him a move to LA, or a descent into pastiche. "He knows everything there is to know about film," Black explains, "but you won't find a single shot in his films that's about another film. He's all about immediacy, in creating these stories that feel so natural, but are carefully constructed narratives. There's a directness, whether it's in something fun, or something more bruising like *Before Midnight*. His films are always accessible, even when they're about the biggest ideas around."

Black traces this honesty to Linklater's East Texas roots, and his refusal to leave it behind. "If he worked in France or New York, he might get taken more seriously, but the films would be different. It's part of a commitment to community that Rick has: nothing that's happened in the Austin film world, from SXSW on down, would have happened if he had left for Hollywood. Even for that alone, he would be important, but he's made these extensive and erudite films that don't feel restrictive or confining, or feel like they're just speaking about or to a certain class of people. That's a major achievement for any filmmaker."

RICHARD LINKLATER: DREAM IS DESTINY IS OUT THIS YEAR.



Don Cheadle, photographed exclusively for *Empire* at The Beverly Hilton, Los Angeles, on February 21, 2016.



BOULDER BRASS

Marvel hero Don Cheadle on why he suffered a “trail of tears” to direct as well as star in his long-gestating biopic of troubled jazz-master Miles Davis

WORDS IAN FREER PORTRAITS STEVE SCHOFIELD



DIRECTORS SPECIAL
DON CHEADLE

“And I didn’t even have to take my pants off!”

announces Don Cheadle to his team as he emerges, unscathed, from *Empire*’s photo shoot before settling in for his grilling. We are with the 51-year-old actor — now writer/director/actor — at The Beverly Hilton hotel, 90210. Later this evening he will be guest of honour at the American Black Film Festival Awards, where he will receive an Excellence In The Arts award from his *Iron Man* and *Avengers* co-star Robert Downey Jr. In a few hours, the hotel will be an opulent red-carpet extravaganza, but at 2pm on a Sunday it looks like a suburban conference centre, a study in beige that Dulux colour charts term ‘Deadening Soullessness’. Happily, Cheadle has life and energy to spare.

He’s so engaged with chatting he doesn’t touch his lunch, and is as happy joking about how he approached *Boogie Nights* (“Just a lot of sex and drugs. I’m a Method actor. Didn’t want to do it. Had to do it”) as he is talking frankly about his own distant relationship with the Academy Awards and this year’s diversity debate. And in case you were wondering, his London accent, last heard in *Ocean’s Thirteen*, has got *so* much better.

Two very different streams of Cheadle’s creativity have flowed forth of late. Recently he returned for the fourth time as James ‘Rhodey’ Rhodes, aka War Machine, in *Captain America: Civil War*. Next up is *Miles Ahead* (hitting cinemas June 16), a ballsy biopic of jazz visionary Miles Davis, co-written by, directed and starring Cheadle. Oh, and he part-financed it and played trumpet, too.

Taking his cue from his subject matter, his feature-directing debut eschews the womb-to-tomb hagiography approach for something that takes risks (it centres on the period of Davis’s writer’s block rather than his genius), throwing in car chases, shoot-outs, fragmented flashbacks and Ewan McGregor as a journalist trying to get the scoop on Davis’s creative impasse. The project landed on the actor’s lap when, at Davis’s induction into the 2006 Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame, the musician’s nephew, Vince Wilburn, announced Cheadle was to play his uncle without the actor’s prior knowledge or consent. But the reality is that Cheadle’s obsession with Davis’s “social music” (the trumpeter hated the term ‘jazz’) is lifelong.

When did you first discover Miles Davis?

My parents listened to Miles so it was probably playing in the background before I had conscious awareness of it. But for me, I clearly became a fan around fifth or sixth grade when I would dig through my parents’ records and sort of came up on him, Cannonball Adderley ❶ and others.

What do you like about him?

The fact that he is able to deal with so many different genres and the fact that he flouts expectations of himself as a musician, that he is impossible to close the parenthesis around and define



Above: As personal hero Miles Davis in June’s *Miles Ahead*.

Here: Taking over as War Machine, with Robert Downey Jr. in *Iron Man 2*.





Getting down in *Boogie Nights* (1997) as porn star Buck Swope.



As Detective Waters in 2004's *Crash*, which Cheadle also produced.



Hotel Rwanda (2004) saw Cheadle receive a Best Actor Oscar nomination.



Cockney sparrer Basher Tarr makes his debut in *Ocean's Eleven* (2001).

FOOTNOTES

① Julian Edwin 'Cannonball' Adderley was a renowned jazz alto saxophonist who played with Miles Davis on the landmark *Kind Of Blue* album. His nickname is a derivation of 'Cannibal', due to his voracious appetite.

② During the project's long gestation, George Clooney sent Cheadle a prank letter on Brad Pitt's letterhead reading: "Hey Don, I just bought the rights to this Miles Davis project and I got Jamie Foxx on board already. I just wondered if I could tug on your coat awhile to see what kind of music I should be using."

③ *Toto Le Héros* is a 1991 Jaco Van Dormael film that creates a mosaic of flashbacks and fantasy sequences as an old man (Michel Bouquet) looks back on his life. Cheadle will have been influenced by the deft way it moves between past and present.

④ *Round Midnight* is a 1986 Bertrand Tavernier film about an ageing alcoholic jazz musician (Dexter Gordon) who befriends a film-poster designer in modern-day Paris. It features Martin Scorsese in a small role.

as one specific musician. He is someone who reinvented himself many, many times. That to me is fascinating. It's like Tiger Woods changing his swing after he's won five majors. Very few people find a sweet spot where they are getting a lot of adulation and go, "Okay, next?"

You've said you wanted to make a film that "felt like Miles, not about Miles". What does that mean?

The intention was always to tell a story that felt impressionistic and improvisational, and I wanted to approach it as Miles approached his métier as opposed to going, "Let me just check off a bunch of boxes about all of the achievements in his life." I wanted to do something with film that I felt he had done so successfully with music, and go into an unknown place and challenge myself.

Did you meet resistance from his family?

We had 'come-to-Jesus' moments where we had to talk to the family and explain, then re-explain what we wanted to do. We had to keep reinforcing the idea that we could make his movie in a very traditional way, going from cradle to grave, but all of those things were just reducing its footprint and making it smaller. We wanted to open this thing up as opposed to making a perfect jewel that can only be enjoyed by a certain number of people. So when we had that discussion, they would stretch and groan and go, "Okay man, this shit better work."

Is it true that the financiers insisted you have a white co-star?

The truth is that casting is always a component when it comes to financing. Having an international actor — not necessarily a white actor — was about finding ways to attract more people into the pot.

Did you ask some of the directors you've worked with for advice?

George Clooney ②, PTA [*Paul Thomas Anderson*], Steven Soderbergh, Carl Franklin. I tapped 'em all. You would expect to hear more instructive things but I was told, "Make sure you get sleep and do your push-ups and stay healthy. Wake up with a plan every day and [make sure] that you execute it as closely as you can, knowing that it is going to fall apart."

What films inspired you?

We looked at a movie like *Toto Le Héros* ③, which was one of our ideas about the way we would do this. Movies like *All That Jazz*, *Round Midnight* ④ and *Little Big Man*. We looked at everything and stole from as many great places as we could. I sat next to *Run Lola Run* director Tom Tykwer in Berlin last week. He said, "I haven't seen your film yet." And I said, "Well, when you see it, you'll see you in it. You'll see what I stole." He was like, "Oh yeah, I do that all the time. That's how you do it."

You've directed theatre and TV. Was it a sharp learning curve directing a feature?

It's something I didn't want to do four or five years ago. I tried to hire another director. It just felt overwhelming and that it was something that was going to break me down. I would not be able to do what I needed to do in other aspects of the film. A big part of me would have been relieved if the movie had gone away, but what made me the most nervous was the little part of me I could imagine looking back and going, "I should have just broken my neck and done it."

How good a musician are you?

I can hear everything. I can write. As an actual musician, I play trumpet now but that's an instrument I started playing for this >



DIRECTORS SPECIAL DON CHEADLE

movie. I played sax growing up, I play bass, I play piano a bit, drums a bit. I've always said that if I could squirrel away enough money and know that I could deal with three years of not working, I could just shred. I have a fantasy about that. My kids are out of the house now in college and that's taken care of. I think about it a lot. Especially when I am with other musicians — there is nothing that gives me a greater pleasure. There's nothing even close to it. 5

Not even directing a film?

Directing this film felt like a trail of tears. That was very, very difficult. My wife came out and saw me halfway through it and said, "You can't do this anymore. Not like this." There were just too many things to do. It would be interesting to not have to be in the thing and just direct it.

This month you also return as Rhodey in *Captain America: Civil War*. Was it weird taking over the character back in 2010 after he had been initiated by another actor?

No. It was weird to people in the town who didn't know anything about the story, and it looked like something different than it was — that I had moved Terrence Howard out of a seat. But that's not what happened at all. On the face of it, do you think I have the power to get someone out of a Marvel movie? He was not coming back and there was an open seat and I was asked to fill it.

How is it playing the character across the range of films?

It is cool that we can pop up in everyone's storylines. We never know when it is going to happen. You get a call and it's like, "Oh, I am in that? Okay. Alright, I guess I'll show up."

The internet thinks you die this time around...

Well, they've got good reason to think so. Doesn't look good for Rhodey [laughs]. He did hit the ground kind of hard!

For all their technical demands, are they fun to do?

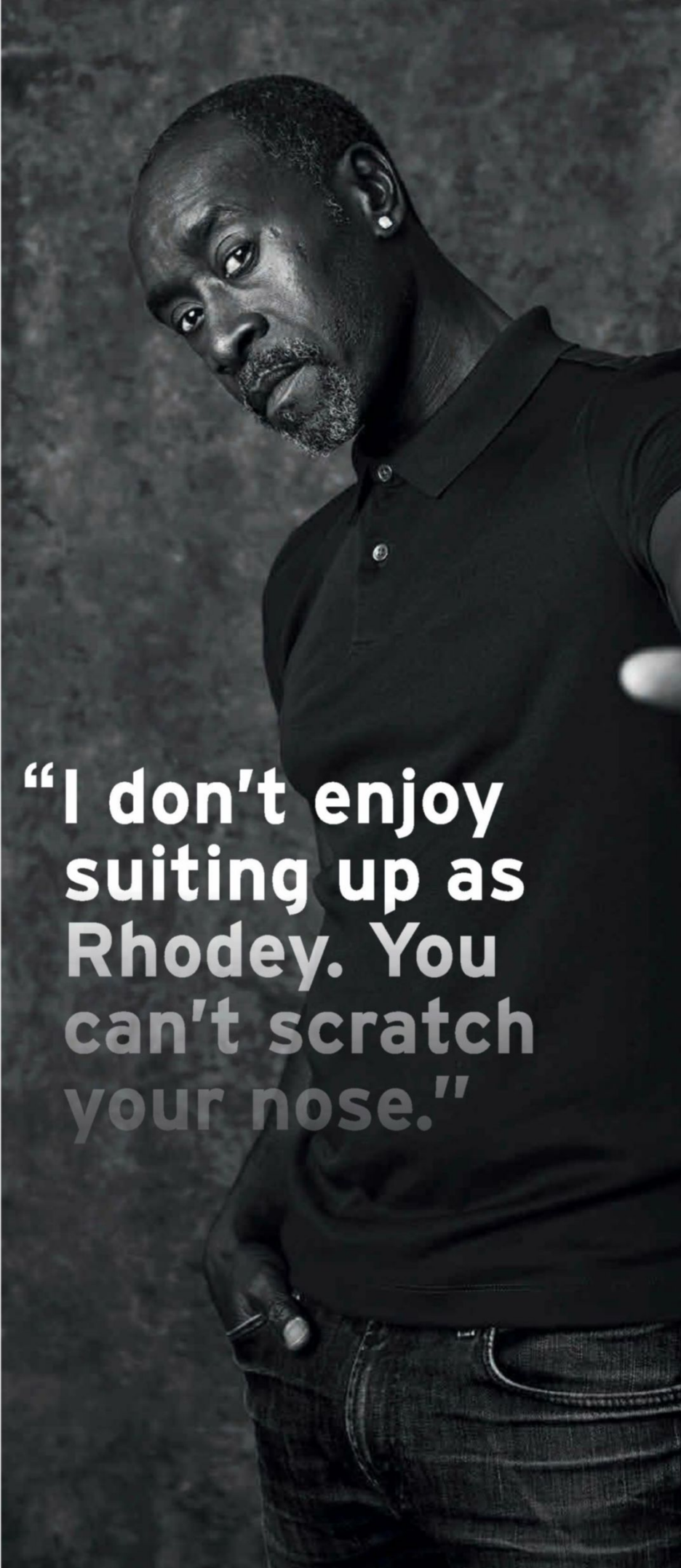
It's always fun to come back and see each other. But when you start suiting up... I don't enjoy that part of it. It's a necessary evil. It's a big, clunky restricting thing that you have on. You can't scratch your nose.

Is it heavy?

They have made it lighter and lighter since I've been more vocal about the implicit racism in Robert's [costume] being way lighter than mine. They started to panic. "Make it lighter! Make it lighter! No chains on the suit!"

Although *Miles Ahead* is your first feature-directing gig, you've been producing since *Crash*. Why was *Crash* important to you?

Paul [Haggis, writer-director] came to me and gave me the script. I read it and had a very visceral emotional reaction to it. I called him afterwards and I was like, "This thing is the bomb. Let's go." And then we went around to every studio in Hollywood and were told, "No." We then spent the next year hustling and trying to find money to put it together, and then slowly started going out to actors and wrangling people. It isn't hard to get actors when you have a piece of material like that, but it's a much different prospect to get financiers on board. Then we were able to find the money and the rest is history.



"I don't enjoy suiting up as Rhodey. You can't scratch your nose."



FOOTNOTES

5 At the end of the film, Cheadle as Miles plays with genuine jazz legends including Herbie Hancock and Wayne Shorter. "The whole movie was worth that for me," says Cheadle.

6 Only two Asian actors have ever won Academy Awards — Dr. Haing S. Ngor for *The Killing Fields* and Miyoshi Umeki for *Sayonara*. No openly gay man has won an acting Oscar, while only one openly gay woman has ever won (Linda Hunt, for *The Year Of Living Dangerously*).

You were not there on its Oscar-winning night. Where were you?
I was actually at Matt Damon's house. I was in New York working on a movie at the time.

Were you gutted not to be there?

No, I wasn't, because I had gone through a really funky process with the Producers Guild, where they determined who was and was not eligible for an Oscar, and it was determined that I was not. It was a rigmarole. I was happy for the film and proud of what happened. I was thankful I was in a place where I was working and not just in LA pissed off that I didn't walk on stage. Because at the end of the day, that's kind of all it was. Everybody knows I produced it. It won the Oscar. It's all good.

The following year you were nominated for Best Actor for *Hotel Rwanda*...

It's interesting. I had been sitting at the SAG Awards with some MGM executives. We didn't win any SAG Awards. I was not that concerned. When you feel like you've done the thing, whether you get the accolade or not, it doesn't diminish what you've done or elevate what you've done, and it's not going to be any better because somebody gave me a statue. But this executive said, "We better get some Oscar nominations or I am not going to spend any more money on this movie." I said, "I can hear you. I'm sitting right here." And I realised why we had to get an Oscar nomination. That's the life blood for the film. That's why the circus matters.

What's your take on the diversity debate sparked by this year's Oscars?

We know what it's about. It's about being in positions — and it's not just black people 6 — where all the diaspora of humanity has an opportunity to tell its story and to use that platform to do it. It's still a business and it is a money-making prospect. I clearly understand it. We're not saying there has to be an egalitarian attitude to creativity. We are talking about opportunities. If there was more parity, and if there was an attempt to be inclusive, it would bear out. Those movies would make as much money. They would be deserving — which is a word I never use — of that kind of an accolade. But I don't think they are getting greenlit. No-one even wants to make them, [unless] you can figure out how to do that in an independent space. If you are talking about black screenwriters creating those stories, why would you even spend your time to create that if you knew there was no chance you were ever going to get it made? If you don't see it represented, why would you even go after it? All of those things have to be looked at. There's no one answer. It's not about getting a metal statue, at the end of the day.

Finally, it's the 15th anniversary of Basher Tarr's unforgettable Cockney accent in *Ocean's Eleven*. Are you repentant?

That's such a hard one for [the Brits]. It's so funny. When I went to the BAFTAs one year, I went out to get something and someone would drive by and go, "Fucking Basher, I love your accent man, you're hilarious," and then another dude would drive by the other way and go, "Fuck you, don't ever fucking do that again, you piece of shit!" It kept going like that all the way back to the hotel. It was like I stole a national secret or shit on the crown jewels.

MILES AHEAD IS OUT ON JUNE 16 AND IS REVIEWED ON PAGE 38.



BRIGHT STARLING

The director of this
month's *Money Monster*
Jodie Foster looks back
to the movie that,
25 years on, has aged
like a nice Chianti

WORDS **TERRI WHITE** PHOTOGRAPHY **SARAH DUNN**







DIRECTORS SPECIAL JODIE FOSTER



INDIANA JONES, JAMES BOND, Will Kane. As you count down the top 10 of the American Film Institute's 100 Greatest Heroes, all is as you'd imagine it would be. But there, sitting quietly at number six, is a rather different character, a very different hero. Not a chest-beating, gun-toting, whip-wielding protagonist, but a softly spoken intellectual who is slight of frame.

Twenty-five years on from the release of *The Silence Of The Lambs*, Hannibal Lecter has become a bona fide money-spinning franchise in his own right. Books, films and TV shows have grown up and flourished around the Chianti-sipping serial killer, his "fff fff fff" now more recognisable to the ear than most classic one-liners. And while Anthony Hopkins undoubtedly gave one of the performances of his career in *Lambs*, the heart of the film belonged — and still belongs — to the woman at number six: Clarice Starling.

That character was almost something different entirely. Early proofs of Thomas Harris's book ended up in the hands of recent Oscar-winner Jodie Foster and, separately, screenwriter Ted Tally. Even though it had bounced around Hollywood with multiple writers declaring it "unadaptable", both immediately knew they wanted to secure the rights. "Everyone was so distracted by the grimness of the subject matter that they couldn't see what was right in front of them," Tally tells *Empire*. "They couldn't see the wonderful character story."

Both were beaten to it by Gene Hackman, who planned to not only write the screenplay, but also produce,

direct and star in the film. When he changed his mind on all counts, Orion Pictures picked it up and Tally found himself with the gig he had wanted all along. Jonathan Demme then signed on to direct, with a very specific and rather unexpected Clarice in mind: Michelle Pfeiffer. Foster, however, wasn't ready to give up without a fight.

"It's somewhat of an unconscious thing when you're attracted to something," she remembers. "You can't stop thinking about it. You understand how her lips would move, what she'd be wearing."

Her preoccupation with the character wasn't a fleeting one and Foster took the bold step of flying to New York to convince Demme that she, in fact, should play Clarice. "I said, 'I know you have somebody else in mind and I love her and think she's fantastic and a great actress, but I'd like to be your second choice.'"

Foster moved to pole position when, apparently put off by the darkness of the story, Pfeiffer walked away from the role. But there had been one person who'd been pulling for Foster all along, from when he first "charged through" Harris's manuscript, right through writing the first draft.

"Intelligence," says Tally when asked what he saw of Clarice in Jodie (and vice versa). "There are actors who are wonderfully sexy and charming and funny, and they're not as smart as the character they're playing. I knew that Jodie was very smart. And I knew that she could project both the vulnerability and the toughness. The things she had been through in her own life would make her sympathetic to the character and make her a champion of women being victimised."

Winning over Demme may have been tougher, but it wasn't just circumstance that secured her casting. Foster took, from the book, the belief that this was not only a whole new female protagonist but also a whole new narrative, particularly for this genre. She spoke to him about myth and, specifically, the mythology that sees a young prince being despatched to slay the dragon but who returns when his people need saving.

"When he comes back, he's figured it out," she says. "He meets himself along the way and works out his character flaws. He's changed and heals his people but he's no longer one of them. That's such a great traditional myth, but it's just not one that's reserved for women. It has always been a man's coming of age."



A meeting of minds: Clarice Starling (Jodie Foster) introduces herself to the incarcerated Dr. Hannibal Lecter (Anthony Hopkins).



Weapons training at the FBI Academy for the fledgling cadet.





Foster on location
with director
Jonathan Demme.



It's a man's world: Jodie Foster perfectly pitches her character as both vulnerable and tough.

Foster's take on Clarice elevated not just the character but also the film as a whole. This isn't simply a 'cop hunts a serial killer while more women suffer' slasher story. This is the story of a young woman trying to save other young women and becoming a hero in the process.

For this shift in the narrative, it was imperative the story be told almost exclusively from Clarice's point of view, which is where Demme's signature styles of shooting — both point of view and intense down-the-lens close-ups — became crucial. But not before Tally got to work on the screenplay, presenting it, bar Lecter's escape and Catherine Martin's abduction, entirely from Clarice's perspective. This was a significant shift from the book.

"This was the most important decision I had to make in the adaptation," Tally says. "Everything sprang from that. The book had multiple points of view and went inside Lecter's head, [FBI agent-in-charge Jack] Crawford's head, Jame Gumb's head. I thought, 'It's her story and I want the audience to, if possible, not know more than she knows. To find out things as she discovers them herself.' She's their representative, she's taking them on this journey with her."

In that sense, Foster and Starling were the audience. She was the guiding morality, the face of normality and decency in direct contrast with so much darkness and brutality, and particularly in contrast with Lecter. This, to Foster, is

the key to Clarice's position at the centre of the film.

"Hannibal is damaged. And he is monstrous and he's abusive. He's lashing out and to him that's delicious — he feeds upon that hurt, because that's the way he knows how to connect with power. That character cannot be your main character. You need to understand him or come to him through someone whose feet are grounded and is grappling with human problems."

That relationship with Lecter however, is not merely one of good versus evil, of right versus wrong. She sees him as not simply a monster but recognises, and to some extent respects, his intelligence as well. Crucially, he is the only man in the film to treat Clarice as an equal, to not patronise, condescend or make judgements upon her based on gender. The audience immediately understand the position she occupies in her world when, getting into the elevator at Quantico in one of the establishing early scenes, a circle of men tower over her as she stands firmly in the centre.

Much of the dynamic and tension with Lecter was based on the real relationship between Foster and Anthony Hopkins, who didn't have a chance to get to know one another before shooting began, so — apart from a table read in Orion's New York headquarters — their first interaction was shooting either side of the glass. "We weren't really comfortable with each other," shares Foster. "Somewhere towards the end, I was having a tuna fish ▶



Starling has her eye on the prize after gunning down serial killer Buffalo Bill aka Jame Gumb (Ted Levine).

“Starling mirrored how I saw myself and what I wanted to do with my work.” Jodie Foster

sandwich and he was sitting across from me. It was sort of like the first time that we had talked. I put my arms around him and he put his arms around me and he said, ‘I was scared of you,’ and I said, ‘I was scared of you!’”

Though both gave Oscar-winning performances, Tally is certain of whose movie it ultimately was: “When people kept wanting to talk about Hannibal, I said, ‘He’s the sizzle, but she’s the steak’. She’s what it’s all about. He’s a supporting character, in effect.”

Though undoubtedly the central protagonist, Clarice isn’t merely a hero without complication. She is vulnerable, intelligent and strong, but also fiercely and unashamedly ambitious, a rare quality in a female character that audiences are meant to root for. During her very first visit to Lecter, Clarice is quick to use her femininity to manipulate Dr. Frederick Chilton (Anthony Heald) into allowing her to see Lecter alone, responding coyly with, “I would have missed the pleasure of your company, sir,” when he questions

why she didn’t make her request earlier, when they were in his office.

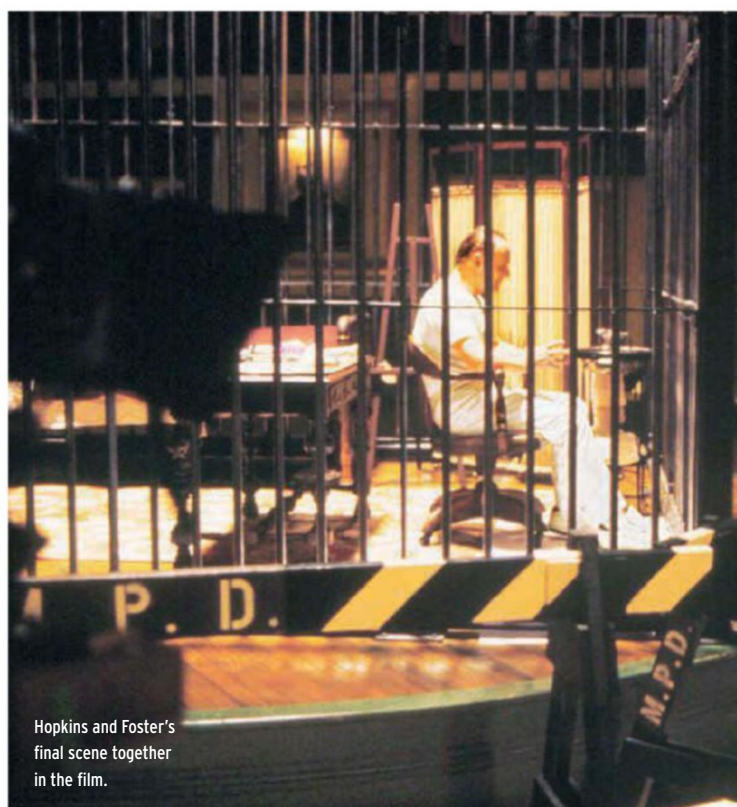
Similarly, it’s been suggested that Clarice is simply bait for Lecter and spends the movie being manipulated by him, but Foster sees this as very much a conscious decision on her part. “This is a character that’s restrained and reserved and calculated,” she says. “She’s wilfully being used by him — she’s so ambitious that she’s willing to let it happen.”

This ambition is ultimately what leads Clarice to Buffalo Bill: not using physical strength and brute force but by reading the killer through the eyes of his victims, through empathy. Foster and Tally see this as being due in large part to Clarice’s own history (“Well, Clarice — have the lambs stopped screaming?”), but crucially, though traumatic, hers is not filled with the conventional forms of trauma most female characters were handed by writers.

“Her past is not about being raped or having her father abuse her or any number of tropes that have always been female motivations on film,” asserts Foster. “You keep waiting for that terrible awful memory — you know,



Alone and on the trail of Buffalo Bill and his victim Catherine Martin (Brooke Smith), who is trapped in the basement of the serial killer’s house.

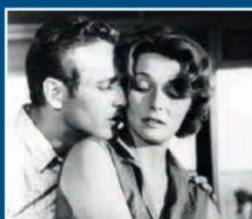


Hopkins and Foster’s final scene together in the film.



QUICK TURNS

ANTHONY HOPKINS MAY HAVE A MERE 18 MINUTES AND 20 SECONDS OF SCREEN TIME FOR HIS BEST ACTOR-WINNING PERFORMANCE AS LECTER. BUT HE DOESN'T HOLD THE RECORD FOR THE SHORTEST. HERE ARE HIS RIVALS:



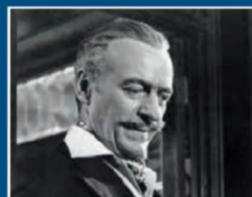
SHORTEST BEST ACTRESS

Patricia Neal, *Hud* (1963)

🕒 **SCREEN TIME:** 21:51

Neal played the housekeeper for the dysfunctional family on the Bannon ranch, in

Martin Ritt's modern-day Western. A very tough part to cast, said Ritt. "It called for a special combination of warmth and toughness. Pat Neal was it."



SHORTEST BEST ACTOR

David Niven, *Separate Tables* (1958)

🕒 **SCREEN TIME:** 15:38

Niven's only Oscar was for playing Major

Pollock in this adaptation of Terence Rattigan's play. The Major is the subject of a scandal that rocks the residential hotel in which he's staying. Much talked-about by other characters, his actual appearances on screen essentially bookend the film.



SHORTEST BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR

Ben Johnson, *The Last Picture Show* (1971)

🕒 **SCREEN TIME:** 08:46

Taciturn Western actor

Johnson hadn't even wanted to play the irascible bar owner Sam, fearing the part was too wordy. Director Peter Bogdanovich promised him an Oscar if he changed his mind. He was right. Johnson's moving monologue at the lake is arguably the heart of the film.



SHORTEST BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS

Beatrice Straight, *Network* (1976)

🕒 **SCREEN TIME:** 05:02

Straight's winning five

minutes is a single devastating scene in which William Holden tells her he's leaving her for Faye Dunaway. Between kitchen table and living room Straight runs the gamut from stillness to anger to inconsolable grief to steely resolve, and even compassion.

OWEN WILLIAMS

DIRECTORS SPECIAL JODIE FOSTER



'that's why Clarice is so singular because she actually is a victim'. When, in fact, it's something simple, that everyone can relate to. It's that love for her father. It's delicate, and their relationship was delicate, and the importance and significance of it is delicate."

Coming off the back of her role as rape victim Sarah Tobias in *The Accused*, Foster was determined to play an entirely different type of character and, more importantly, an entirely different type of woman. Many people around her thought this was the wrong direction after picking up a gold statue. They were surprised she wasn't, as she puts it, plumping for a more "flashy, flamboyant character". For Foster, though, she craved this shift away from victimhood.

"There really was a pattern where I just kept playing women who were victims," she says. "There was something about this shift to a woman that could identify with victims but was destined to be the person who saves them because she knows them so well. In a weird way it mirrored how I saw myself and what I wanted to do with my work."

Foster's gamble (if it could ever really be considered such a thing) paid off and Clarice was something genuinely revolutionary in film at the time — the late '80s, the start of the '90s — and Foster, Tally and Demme all knew they'd created something and someone that had never been seen on screen before. Which made it all the more surprising when Foster didn't reprise the role for the sequel.

She cites the sheer amount of time it took Harris to write the next book as the reason, something she says surprised them all (*Hannibal* wasn't published until 1999). "I think we all thought we'd be joining together again," she laments. "We didn't realise at the time that that would be it."

Yet there is surely solace in the knowledge that the impact of this character, as portrayed in *The Silence Of The Lambs*, has in no way lessened and is still felt through other films, and through female characters as a whole. Foster tells *Empire* a story about taking her kids — now old enough — to see *The Silence Of The Lambs* at a movie theatre in Los Angeles and her joy that they wanted to talk about it afterwards. It had stood the test of time. Clarice had stood the test of time. She still resonated.

Suddenly number six feels like it doesn't do her justice. ■

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The Hateful Eight, David Cronenberg Collection, Goosebumps and Fear And Loathing In Las Vegas on Blu-ray, Dirty Grandpa, Steve Jobs DVDs, The X-Files "I Want To Believe" posters plus more!

p112

REWIND



108

Michael J. Fox goes to school, Mickey Rourke has a drink and James Caan gets an alien partner.

TV



110

Luke Evans gets his swash buckled in the third season of sea-faring actioner *Black Sails*.

MASTERPIECE



111

Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger's heart-warming anti-war romance.

CLASSIC SCENE



114

Want to spoof *Ghostbusters* in your new movie? Who you gonna call? Bill Murray! That's who!

NEW RELEASES

DAWN OF THE DEAD

The Marvel universe gets a foul-mouthed rejuvenation by the Merc With The Mouth as Ryan Reynolds swears like a trooper, breaks bones galore and pitches a comic book hero film firmly at adults. You know, not for kids. **p100**



The Hateful Eight

★★★★★

FROM NOW / RATED R18+

DVD BR UV

A WINTER'S TALE



LADIES AND gentlemen, we have reached Peak Tarantino. Now let's be clear, as you settle into your seats: this ain't no bad thing in this town. The markers are all there: a very familiar cast of characters (Samuel L. Jackson, Kurt Russell, Michael Madsen); pulse-quickening monologues; shocking violence that no longer shocks; a thin veil of parody hanging over proceedings.

The film opens with bounty hunter John Ruth (Russell) delivering black-of-eye outlaw Daisy Domergue (Jennifer Jason Leigh) to Red Rock to hang — a too-long journey during which they collect Marquis Warren (Jackson) and Sheriff Chris Mannix (Walton Goggins) en route, before stopping at Minnie's Haberdashery for coffee and comfort. The former is in plentiful supply, but they're in for a shock on the latter. This is where the film picks up in both pace and punch (no pun intended) and the good ol' fashioned killing begins.

This is not the same old Tarantino, though. Ennio Morricone scores for the first time, drawing a sweeping and ominous sound that anchors the almost-three-hour film beautifully. It's matched only by the startling landscapes, Tarantino and director of photography Robert Richardson going to town with Ultra Panavision 70.

EXTRAS With such texture and ambition, the special features here are disappointing. There's an interesting, if slightly prosaic ode to 70mm, footage of the Comic-Con panel and a standard making-of. But when the main event looks like *this*, it seems churlish to complain. **TERRI WHITE**

EMPIRE VIEWING GUIDE

EMPIRE
SPOILER
ALERT!

WORDS DAMON WISE

TARANTINO AND CAST TALK US
THROUGH THE HIGH POINTS OF
THEIR WYOMING WHITE-KNUCKLER



“Who The Hell Are You?”

James Parks has the distinction of playing the same character in two Tarantino movies, appearing as Sheriff Edgar McGraw in *Kill Bill: Vol. 1* and *Death Proof* (he also reprises the character in *Machete*). For *The Hateful Eight* he learned to drive a six-horse stagecoach. “I had to train for three months,” Parks says. “The horses pull hard, so pretty quickly it can get out of hand. They used to tell me that you can go from hero to zero in one second.”

14.33

Daisy Takes A Hit

A controversial scene sees bounty hunter John Ruth (Kurt Russell) elbow criminal Daisy Domergue (Jennifer Jason Leigh) in the face. “I don't give a fuck about the fact she's a woman,” says Tarantino. “She's a *character*. Daisy's definitely gonna have people on her side, rooting for her. Then you realise how fucking crazy she is and all of a sudden, John Ruth seem reasonable.”



23.42

Cold Comfort

Chris Mannix (Walton Goggins), who claims to be the new sheriff of Red Rock, appears, wrapped in a blanket. In the screenplay, the character had a “pimp coat”, which Goggins donned for his first day on set. “I walk up,” he recalls, “and Quentin says, ‘Yeah, take that off.’ I say, ‘But it's 12 degrees outside.’ He says, ‘Yeah, take it off.’ But Quentin was so smart to do it. It plays a big part in the story: Mannix and his journey to getting warm.”



36.00

Minnie's House

Minnie's Haberdashery is described in the script as “a slightly bigger than normal stagecoach stopover” and is where the rest of the story plays out. “I brought in Yohei Taneda, who did the Japanese sets for *Kill Bill*,” says Tarantino. “This is a set that we have to live in – and it has to be lived in. There is an *Iceman Cometh* vibe I was thinking about as I was writing. I was like, ‘Oh, this is turning into a play.’”



50.29

The Cow-Puncher

Michael Madsen's Joe Gage scribbles his life story. "I've written four books of short stories and poems," says Madsen. "And it's funny, because every time I've given Quentin one, he's never said a word. But before this scene he goes, 'You know why I made Joe do that? Because you're a writer.' So it's like a personal compliment, that he allowed me to have my guy do that."

01:25:37

Silent Night

Bob (Demián Bichir) sits down to play a seasonal tune at the piano. "I was sure it was gonna be a one-finger version," says Bichir, "but I got all kinds of different exercises to do. My coach and I worked on a Debussy piece – I got obsessed."



Not The Gourmet Shit

In the first of several shocking twists, John Ruth drinks a cup of coffee that would not meet with approval from *Pulp Fiction*'s Jimmy (Tarantino in what is probably his best Tarantino-film cameo). In fact, it's been poisoned. Says Madsen, "When I first read the script, I remember thinking, 'I don't wanna be the cowboy fellow, man. I wanna be John Ruth, man!' But then I get to the part where John Ruth's fucking throwing up blood on the floor and I go, 'Oh well, maybe not...'" Interestingly, in Tarantino's script he spells coffee "coffy" throughout – which may be a reference to the 1973 blaxploitation classic. Or typos.



02:03:46

"And I'm Jody..."

The first sighting of Channing Tatum as Jody, Daisy's brother. "This is a very peculiar gang," says Bichir. "We love playing whatever role is necessary in order to achieve our goals. We're not just vulgar burglars: we see it as an art form. What is this Mexican doing in this gang? What is an English guy doing in this gang? It's a very interesting mix. It's almost like a theatre company."

02:16:51

Kill Bell

Zoë Bell's Six-Horse Judy is ignominiously tossed into a well. "I've worked in some pretty full-on conditions," says the QT regular, "especially as a stunt girl, if the conditions are a bit too extreme for an actress. For the scene where I'm thrown around in the snow, my assumption was that I was going to have to do it myself." Luckily for Bell, they used a dummy.



02:38:35

And Then There Were Two

Both seriously wounded, Chris Mannix and Major Marquis Warren sentence Daisy Domergue to death. But is Mannix really the sheriff of Red Rock? "I can never tell you!" says Goggins. "What's interesting is that I asked Quentin that very question the first time we sat down, and he said, 'What do you think?' And as I was about to answer he said, 'I don't wanna know the answer to that question.' So I know. But nobody else knows."

ALSO OUT

**Hyena**

★★★★★

FROM NOW / RATED R18+

DVD BR

London copper Michael Logan (Peter Ferdinando) is violent, corrupt and usually high, but gets the job done... with severe qualifications. Harassed by a police complaints investigator (Stephen Graham) and ruthless new Albanian crime bosses on his Queensway patch, Logan tries to stay in the game at any cost. Writer-director Gerard Johnson and chameleon-like star Ferdinando impressed with their serial killer movie *Tony*, and continue their strong collaboration here. This is a tragedy of people trapped in webs of their own making, struggling as bad things loom closer. Bonus star for The The's soundtrack.

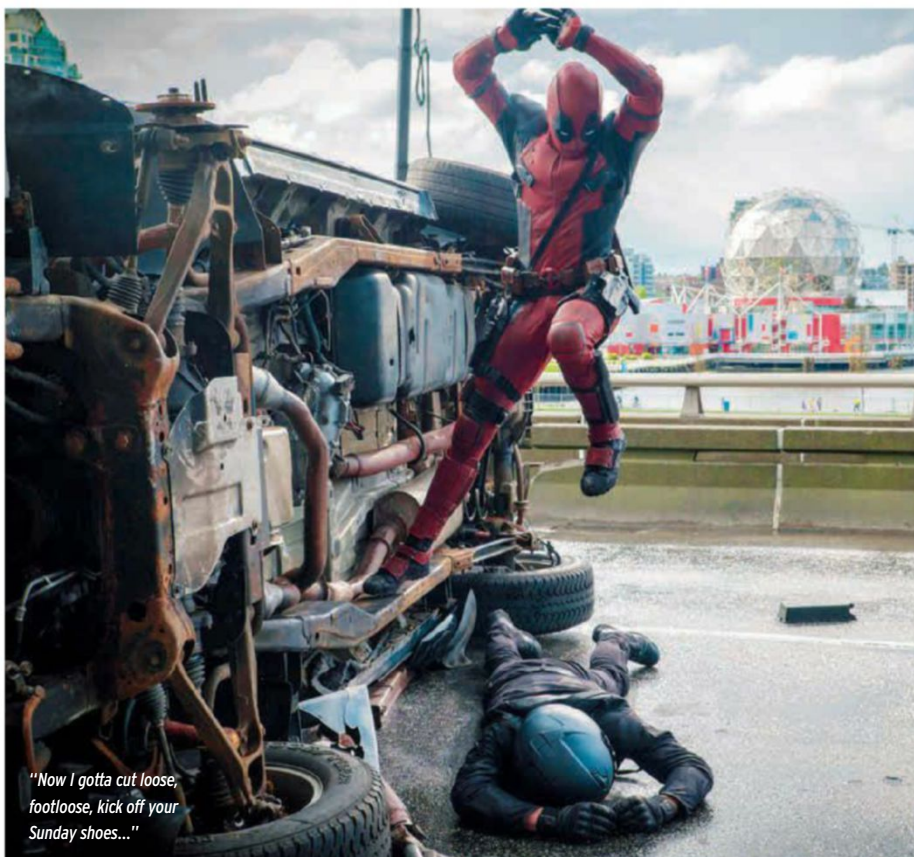
EXTRAS None. **KN****The 33**

★★★★★

FROM NOW / RATED M

DVD BR

The uplifting news story of 2010, the ordeal of 33 Chilean miners trapped in a collapsed mine for 69 days deserves a better movie than this. Beneath ground, it draws a crew of thinly sketched types led by a too-good-to-be-true Antonio Banderas. Above ground, it is possibly worse, drilling into disaster movie-style rescue attempts (represented by the none-more-Chilean Gabriel Byrne) and sudsy family dramas (represented by the none-more-Chilean Juliette Binoche). The bones of the story work, but you want the film to nail the emotional truth. Instead we get a heavy-handed score that hits you over the head with a panpipe.

EXTRAS None. **IAN FREER**

"Now I gotta cut loose,
footloose, kick off your
Sunday shoes..."

Deadpool

★★★★★

FROM NOW / RATED MA15+ / DIRECTOR TIM MILLER /

CAST RYAN REYNOLDS, MORENA BACCARIN, T.J.

MILLER, ED SKREIN, BRIANNA HILDEBRAND

DVD BR UV 4K

COCKPUNCHER TRIUMPHANT**IF THE THOUGHT OF**

ultraviolent superhero films crammed with crude humour fill you with unbridled glee, you're in luck: the astonishing success of the mid-budget *Deadpool* — it's clocked a worldwide gross of \$US761 million and is the highest grossing 20th Century Fox film ever not directed by George Lucas or James Cameron — all but guarantees a slew of them will be headed our way (expect the filmic Wolverine to finally get as stabby as his comic book counterpart in next year's *Wolverine 3*). In a perverse twist, all it took to create a game changer that now stands as one of the biggest comic book movies of all time was simply additional dick jokes and a slew of severed limbs. *Deadpool* would surely be pleased.

Now that the dust and decapitated heads have somewhat settled, it's a little easier to see *Deadpool* for what it is: a self-referential, lightly refreshing superhero-film semi-pistake with a rote revenge plot that overflows with a relentless barrage of fourth-wall breaking, pop-culture-reference-heavy quips (many of them dated; it's unlikely anyone under 30 will smile knowingly at jokes involving Wham! and Voltron) that land

about half the time, coupled with occasionally inventive bloody action (see the brilliantly staged opening freeway action sequence, previewed in leaked test footage from a few years back that led to the film being greenlit — a sequence the film struggles to top). It may be an exhilarating ride on the rollercoaster while you're on board, but afterwards it's unlikely you'll be reminiscing about all the surprising twists and turns.

Making up for the basic storyline — cancer-stricken mercenary Wade Wilson seeks revenge on super-powered no-good Ajax (an unmemorable Ed Skrein doing British baddie-by-numbers) for turning him into a scarred freak with advanced healing abilities — is Ryan Reynolds, the man who championed the film for years before it was given the go-ahead (some speculate Reynolds is the one who leaked the aforementioned test footage). Reynolds has charisma and quick wit to burn, and *Deadpool* is the perfect playground for the Canadian actor to show the world what he's got after an unfortunate string of mostly forgettable films (hello *R.I.P.D.*, *Self/less*, *The Change-Up* et al.). It's his innate charm and motormouthed cheek that in large part sells the film, proving that superhero films don't necessarily need a barrage of expensive CGI and a serious tone to strike a chord — just a rapid succession of cock punches and a semi-forgotten '90s Salt-N-Pepa hit on the soundtrack.

EXTRAS Audio commentaries from Ryan Reynolds, screenwriters Rhett Reese and Paul Wernick, director Tim Miller and *Deadpool* co-creator Rob Liefeld; deleted and extended scenes with commentary by Tim Miller; *From Comics To Screen... To Screen* featurette; Gallery, gag reel and something called 'Deadpool's Fun Sack'...

JAMES JENNINGS

Leo used any means necessary to take Redmayne out of the race.



The Revenant



FROM NOW / RATED MA15+ / DIRECTOR ALEJANDRO GONZÁLEZ IÑÁRRITU / CAST LEONARDO DICAPRIO, TOM HARDY, WILL POULTER, DOMHNALL GLEESON

DVD BR UV 4K

THE BEAR NECESSITIES



IT WAS FORETOLD AND so it came to pass: Leonardo DiCaprio finally won an Oscar. And all he had to do was spend *The Revenant's* 10-month shoot bedding down in animal carcasses,

risking hypothermia in icy rivers and eating (and then vomiting back up) bison liver. He's a vegetarian.

Do these hardships make it a great performance? The best of the last year? Not on their own, but DiCaprio's work here is astounding and often wordless. His pain, both emotional (dead son) and physical (angry bear), is often conveyed through just an expression or ragged breathing pattern. Or a massive gash on his neck. They may not have won their category, but the make-up team were no slouches either.

A revenant is someone who has returned from the dead, which is the heart of this revenge tale. It's a true story in essence. The headline events — ambush, bear attack, journey against the odds — all happened, but the details have been embellished for the film. The screenplay is based on the 2002 book of the same name by Michael Punke — whose day job is being the US Ambassador to the World Trade Organisation in



"Rhubarb rhubarb? Rhubarb! Rhubarb!"

Geneva — but in the book, as in real life, Glass has no son, and instead of seeking bloody vengeance, he accepts \$300 in compensation. It's clear the myth is more cinematic than the reality.

Alejandro Iñárritu's take-no-prisoners direction may not have won him many friends on set — filming with high-tech cameras using only natural light, Iñárritu says they lost almost half of each day's shooting time just travelling to remote locations; many crew members were fired or quit during the arduous production — but the results are visually stunning: "If we [used] greenscreen with everybody having a good time, everybody will be happy, but most likely the film would be a piece of shit," Iñárritu said afterwards. The brutal beauty of the winter landscapes — filming took place across Canada, Montana, Arizona, Mexico and Argentina — dwarfs the actors; for a movie that operates on a very personal level, there are no shortage of panoramic shots to show just how small those

human concerns are in the grand scale. Iñárritu's regular cinematographer Emmanuel Lubezki took home an Oscar for his work — his third in a row, after winning for *Gravity* in 2013 and *Birdman* in 2014.

Although DiCaprio took the acting plaudits, he has able support. Tom Hardy (nominated for Best Supporting Actor, but for some reason never really in the conversation as a winner) conveys a tangible sense of danger; Poulter, wide-eyed and naive, teeters on the brink of breakdown as events escalate.

EXTRAS This release is let down by its extras, consisting of just a 45-minute documentary and a selection of on-set photographs. And that documentary is on YouTube already. Given all the on-set drama and the subsequent critical success, it seems odd no-one thought to sit down to even record a commentary track. Even *Brother Bear* has a commentary track.

JONATHAN PILE

Victor Frankenstein

★★★★★

FROM NOW / RATED M / DIRECTOR PAUL MCGUIGAN /
CAST DANIEL RADCLIFFE, JAMES MCAVOY, JESSICA
BROWN FINDLAY

DVD BR 

LET'S BE FRANK



CLASSIC LITERARY WORKS like Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's *Frankenstein* will be subject to all kinds of interpretation. James Whale's 1931 masterpiece went wildly off-book and defined

cinema's long relationship with the text, and the past few years alone have seen adaptations both faithful (Kenneth Branagh's 1994 version, Bernard Rose's 2015 take) and loose (*I, Frankenstein*, *Penny Dreadful*'s heady stew). And now here's Max 'Chronicle' Landis and Paul 'Sherlock' McGuigan, aiming to do for Victor Frankenstein what Guy Ritchie did for Sherlock Holmes, set in the past but with a playful, postmodern sensibility that zaps new life into Shelley's 200-year-old Gothic masterpiece.

Although the film takes its name from the student doctor (James McAvoy) whose infernal experiments jolt a corpse to life using that

new-fangled electricity, we enter Victor's world through the haunted, stage-painted eyes of a hunchback clown (Daniel Radcliffe), who moonlights as the circus sawbones. After a daring escape — and a bit of toe-curlingly nasty boil-draining business — this nameless wretch is given the name 'Igor' (after Victor's absent roommate, who has vanished in mysterious circumstances) and put to work helping Victor with his stated ambition to build a living being from dead tissue.

Landis's script wittily addresses the ethical dilemmas of progressive science and the inherent blasphemy of man playing God — and there's wicked-smart stuff about whether history will remember the name 'Frankenstein' as being synonymous with the man or the monster. It helps that McGuigan's steampunk staging is brought to life with real sets and practical effects, but it's the actors who work hardest to

sell the reboot: Radcliffe strikes just the right tone as Victor's acolyte-turned-conscience, although he is always at risk of being swallowed whole by McAvoy's shouty, spittle-flecked performance, the kind that might give Al Pacino or Brian Blessed pause.

On the downside, it's perhaps 10 minutes too long, there's one villain too many (Freddie Fox's foppish Finnegan is largely superfluous), and, as is often the case with bromances, the female role (Jessica Brown Findlay's trapeze artist, Lorelei) appears to exist largely to deflect suspicions that Victor and Igor only have eyes for each other (not counting the eyes in formaldehyde, of course). But these are minor gripes: from *Moulin Rouge*-esque opening to fire-and-brimstone finale, it's a ripping yarn genetically engineered to please fans of *Sherlock* and *Doctor Who*.

EXTRAS Deleted scenes, making-of, image gallery. **DAVID HUGHES**



Goosebumps

★★★★★

FROM NOW / RATED PG / DIRECTOR ROB LETTERMAN /
CAST JACK BLACK, DYLAN MINNETTE, ODEYA RUSH,
AMY RYAN, RYAN LEE, JILLIAN BELL

DVD BR UV 

YOU COULD BE STINE



IT'S SCARY HOW EASILY supernatural comedy can go wrong. For every *Ghostbusters* there seems to be a dozen films like *R.I.P.D.*. Happily, *Goosebumps* gets it just right. It's consistently arch and

knowing from the off, and while the scares won't wake you up at three in the morning drenched in sweat, there are enough smartly manufactured jumps to keep things interesting.

It helps to have solid source material, in this case R.L. Stine's collection of spooky tales for teens and tweens. Rather than adapting a single book, director Rob Letterman and screenwriter Darren Lemke bet everything on Jack Black, placing his incarnation of Stine at the heart of an adventure in which the myriad monsters from all those luridly titled books come to life and wreak havoc on a small town.

The supernatural smorgasbord offers up



killer gnomes, hungry yeti and the principal villain of the piece, a malevolent ventriloquist's dummy called Slappy. The one-damn-undead-thing-after-another onslaught works a treat, constantly posing the film's heroes new challenges and, crucially, supplying a fresh stream of gags.

Dialling back his usual mania, Black is a coiled spring of sarcasm as the tenacious R.L. battling his own worst mistakes. The decision to deploy Stine as a character is a masterstroke, leading to a succession of gloriously meta moments — most notably a rant about the

success of a rival author, one "Steve" King.

But for all this, Black isn't really the lead — that honour instead goes to Dylan Minnette as Zach Cooper, playing a kid who's just moved to the area with his mother (an excellent Amy Ryan) and who is recovering from the death of his father. And this is the film's most surprising element: it tackles death, loss and the nature of grieving with a deft hand, while never forgetting the pleasures to be had from a creepy puppet with a Napoleon complex.

EXTRAS Bloopers reel, featurettes, more.

CHRIS HEWITT

"Who brought the marshmallows?"



BONUS FEATURE

THE GOOD SOHN

DIRECTOR PETER SOHN TALKS ABOUT THE GOOD DINOSAUR'S TROUBLED JOURNEY TO THE SCREEN...

How different is the final film from the original concept?

I started off with Bob Peterson, the original director, kind of as his development artist. I had worked with him on *Up*, and so he pitched this idea, this simple, broad growth story of a boy and his "dog" but it quickly got complex. There was a father-son story that became a lot more powerful, and then it was a changing of the community story, almost like *Footloose*...

Dinosaur *Footloose*? You so should have kept that!

[Laughs] And then the community defends itself against these terrifying monsters, and there was a magic tree involved, and it just got really complicated. And so one of the first things I did obviously, bringing it back to the original concept, was make Arlo a younger character. Arlo was originally a much older character. There wasn't really the frontier aspect of survival, it really was just kind of a dinosaur living in this community. I wanted to really honour that idea of maturation and so once I made Arlo younger, boy, the cast had to change, a lot of changes came just from that concept alone.

Sam Elliott is a great T-Rex...

Yeah, absolutely. Some characters are immediately on the page, like I remember when we were designing Butch, Sam Elliott's character, we always thought it would be great to have a dinosaur that was like Sam Elliott. You know, big, rough and tough. And then we would pitch it to John Lasseter. "What if this character was kind of like Sam Elliott?" And they're like, "Who are you thinking about to voice it?" "Well, we haven't thought about that yet, but it would be kind of like Sam Elliott." And then John was like, "Why don't you just ask Sam Elliott?!" And we're like, "Okay!" [Laughs] And Sam was gracious to help us out, and he was incredible to work with.

DAVID MICHAEL BROWN

The Good Dinosaur



FROM NOW / RATED PG / DIRECTOR PETER SOHN / CAST JEFFREY WRIGHT, FRANCES MCDORMAND, MALEAH NIPAY-PADILLA, JACK MCGRAW, ANNA PAQUIN, SAM ELLIOTT



T-REXTASY



THE GOOD DINOSAUR HAS an enthralling story to tell, one packed with tension, heartache and intriguing twists. The bad news? That story is not on screen — it's behind the scenes.

But let's focus first on what is there. In a parallel universe where dinosaurs weren't wiped out, Arlo (Raymond Ochoa) is the runt of a family of farming Apatosauruses, his natural nervousness meaning he struggles to make his mark. Literally — when the members of the family prove themselves worthy, they're permitted to leave a footprint on the side of their corn silo. Disaster strikes when his father

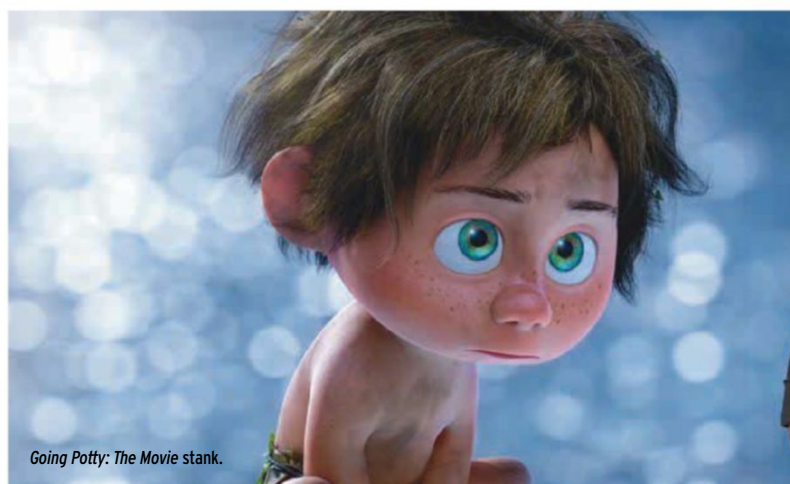
Henry (Jeffrey Wright) dies hunting a feral boy who's been eating their crops. Arlo discovers the boy, gives chase, falls into a river and is carried downstream. The bulk of the film covers his adventures and burgeoning friendship with the boy who he names Spot. Fittingly — in this world humans have an intelligence level roughly the level of dogs.

It's all very effective, the relationships wrenching the requisite emotions from you. But it's also too familiar — the death of Henry and Arlo's journey home are both highly reminiscent of *The Lion King*, while the T-Rex family have shades of *Finding Nemo*'s shark Bruce. And they aren't the only times you're hit by Disney/Pixar déjà vu.

After hitting third-act issues, the original director Bob Peterson was replaced by Pete Sohn and the film was effectively started again. There's a fascinating tale to be told about the production trials, and four years' worth of binned footage that would benefit from an in-depth documentary.

EXTRAS As it stands, we get the standard package of deleted scenes, happy-smiley featurettes and the (very good) short film *Sanjay's Super Team*. It all feels like a missed opportunity. Much like the film itself.

JONATHAN PILE



Going Potty: The Movie stank.



ALSO OUT



The Big Short

★★★★★

FROM NOW / RATED M



Anchorman director Adam McKay's Oscar-winning exploration of the financial crash of 2008, and the anti-heroes who predicted and profited from it, is one of the year's funniest comedies and scariest horror films in one unconventional package. The ensemble cast sparkles and McKay's loose directorial style is instrumental in making the sheer onslaught of arcane info palatable. **CH**



Stretch

★★★★★

FROM NOW / RATED MA15+



Bizarre is an understatement for the shit that *Stretch* (Patrick Wilson), a down-on-his-luck Hollywood limo driver, gets into on the night he meets Chris Pine's coke-addled billionaire. We're supposed to root for Wilson's snarky protagonist but there is little to love. At least the sloppy and meandering beginning is saved by a second act rife with fun chase scenes and crude *The Hangover*-esque comedy. **JG**



Yakuza Apocalypse

★★★★★

FROM NOW / RATED MA15+



The latest genre-bending mindblower from Japan's prolific provocateur Takashi Miike (*Audition*, *Ichii The Killer*), *Yakuza Apocalypse* goes off like a frog in a sock. An ass-kicking frog that has found itself embroiled in a bloody feud betwixt vampire yakuza and *The Raid*'s Mad Dog (Yayan Ruhian), that is. Gleefully twisted, this is Miike at his playful best. **DMB**



'Speed dating' meant something a little different in the Deep South.

Cabin Fever

★★★☆☆

FROM NOW / RATED MA15+ / DIRECTOR TRAVIS ZARIWNY

/ CAST GAGE GOLIGHTLY, MATTHEW DADDARIO, SAMUEL DAVIS



THE GRAPES OF ROTH



HORROR FANS CAN BE A baffling bunch sometimes, often screaming bloody murder when a genre classic gets remade, forgetting that some of their favourite modern horror films (*The Thing*, *The Fly*,

The Ring) are remakes. In the case of the outcry over the *Cabin Fever* update, however, it's unclear whether the principal objection is that Eli Roth's 2002 film was an untouchable classic, or that 14 years simply isn't a sufficient gap to warrant a redo. Unless it's a foreign-language film, in which case it's okay.

In Hollywood terms, the *Cabin Fever* remake actually makes sense, given that a) the teenagers it's aimed at were toddlers when the original came out, and b) it failed to launch a successful franchise, despite spawning two sequels (the second of which was better than the first, all but disowned by its director Ti West). Yet there's an obvious flaw: in most cases — the recent *Martyrs* remake comes to mind — one would trot out the old, "Skip the crappy remake, and check out the original." But, let's be honest, the original *Cabin Fever*'s acclaim had more to do with the moribund state of American horror at the time of its release than its inherent brilliance. It's good, goopy fun, but it's no *Evil Dead*, much as Roth tried to channel the spirit of Sam Raimi's seminal indie horror.



ABC budget cuts hit Play School hard.

Directed by Travis Z (for Zariwny) from a script that's nearly a scene-by-scene (and sometimes word-for-word) copy of the original, the shiny new 2016 version has some unimaginatively updated characters (if one can call such one-dimensional talking props "characters") and demonstrably nastier effects, the latter to curiously reductive effect. Absent is Roth's tongue-in-cheek (or tongue-through-cheek) sensibility, the most memorable set pieces — the leg-shaving scene, and the, ahem, 'sliding into third base' shenanigans — coming off as merely gross, rather than gross-out fun.

As *Cabin Fever* drags humourlessly toward its franchise-bait ending, the growing sense of dread it fosters has less to do with the intended horror of watching your BFFs become infected by a deadly virus, than the creeping suspicion that nobody's heart is really in it.

EXTRAS None. **DAVID HUGHES**

Krampus

★★★★★

FROM NOW / RATED M / DIRECTOR MICHAEL DOUGHERTY
/ CAST ADAM SCOTT, TONI COLLETTE, DAVID
KOECHNER, ALLISON TOLMAN, KRISTA STADLER

DVD BR 

JINGLE HELL



ALL THE WAY BACK TO Dickens, the best Christmas stories — *It's A Wonderful Life*, *Gremlins*, *Die Hard*, *Bad Santa* — combine cynicism and sentiment. *Krampus* delivers this mix perfectly from its

stunning opening, slo-mo consumerist mall riots accompanied by Bing Crosby's *It's Beginning To Look A Lot Like Christmas*, before turning into a siege-type horror that effectively melds the set-ups of *Christmas Vacation* and *The Mist*.

After deft thumbnail sketches of the young hero's fairly awful folks — played just on the right side of caricature by Adam Scott (overworked Dad), Toni Collette (wound too-tight Mom), David Koechner (overbearing uncle), Allison Tolman (crass aunt) and Conchata Ferrell (drunken boorish great-aunt) — the fateful wish is made, and extreme winter



Santa wouldn't survive his sleigh-jacking.

falls on the neighbourhood. The German granny (Krista Stadler) who knows what to expect keeps the fire going to prevent the hoofed and horned Krampus from coming down the chimney, while the house is attacked by creatures out of Clive Barker's Advent calendar: lurking snowmen, a feral Christmas tree angel, murderous elves, a python-like, child-eating jack-in-the-box clown and malicious gingerbread men.

It feels a little like Charles Band's VHS-era little-creature horror comics (*Ghoulies*, *Troll*) redone with state-of-the-art effects, as writer-director Michael Dougherty (of *Halloween*)

favourite *Trick 'r Treat*) balances gruesome chuckles with genuine creepiness, seductively inventive cinema and a welcome touch of warmth. Though set up as stereotypes, the characters change when the horrors start.

Like Scrooge, the clan learn lessons about the meaning of Christmas while being tormented by the supernatural, and Dougherty shows awful-but-understandable people getting past resentments and irritations to band together against Krampus and his cronies.

EXTRAS Deleted scenes, gag reel, more.


KIM NEWMAN



Sisters

★★★★★

FROM NOW / RATED M

DVD BR UV 

A perfect pitch on paper proves a riot on screen, with Tina Fey and Amy Poehler cranking it up as fortysomething sisters determined to age disgracefully. The pair are, as always, on fire, as Kate and Maura: one a train-wreck of a hairdresser, the other a do-gooder evidently ripe for corruption. The catalyst for their blow-out party of defiance: their elderly parents (James Brolin and Dianne Wiest, also on top form), who announce they're selling the family nest for some fun of their own. All heck breaks loose, as the sisters vow to stop their plans in their tracks. It's a hoot.

EXTRAS Deleted scenes, gag reel and featurettes including *Grown-Up Parties Suck*.

ED GIBBS

BONUS FEATURE

NAILED IT

GRETA LEE TALKS ABOUT HER SCENE STEALING SISTERS' ROLE AS HAE-WON...

In the wrong hands the character of Hae-Won could easily be politically incorrect...

Totally! I had some concerns reading it, I wanted to make sure that wouldn't happen, but I had a good feeling. I mean working with Tina Fey and Amy Poehler and Paula Pell [writer], and I figured that everyone was going to be on the same page.

With Tina Fey and Amy Poehler on set there must have been a lot of improvising?

We all went off script I would say 75 per cent of the time. I'm so happy they included so much of it with the DVD, because there were endless possibilities in terms of a joke, and Paula is really someone who likes to use post-it notes, so right before they call action, she will secretly slip you a post-it note with an alternate joke on it to try, without telling anyone else. So yeah, we improvised a lot.



Was it hard not to crack up acting opposite Amy and Tina?

Yes, it is hard, but you know that you will ruin a take if you laugh. So that pressure can sometimes be a useful tool in comedy, to help yourself not to break. Other helpful little tips I've picked up are thinking about something sad, like your dog dying, or a family member falling. So just anything extreme and dark, whatever it takes, so you don't laugh. Amy and Tina are real pros! They rarely break, and when they do it's very gratifying. I did get to make Amy break once. That was very exciting for me personally.

It must have been a fun set to be on?

There were so many fun moments. It was just such a dreamy situation to be a part of. One of the surprising things was, along with Tina Fey, Amy Poehler and Maya Rudolph, we also had people like John Cena in the cast. It was so great to have someone like him thrown into the mix. A lot of us were attempting to follow his diet [laughs], we were curious to know what kind of regimen he was on, in order to maintain his ridiculous physique. The few of us who tried to match his everyday lunch. We lasted about two days before we had to throw in the towel.

DAVID MICHAEL BROWN

BONUS FEATURE

DRAMA QUEEN

ELISABETH MOSS ON WHY SHE HOPES *QOE* TURNS YOU OFF***Queen Of Earth's* a tough movie to watch.**

It really is. It's funny, because it was really fun to make. We were pretty confident that no one would like *Queen Of Earth*, we almost took pleasure in making something that is very brutal and tough and turned people off. So we fully intend to try next time to make something that pushes everybody too far.

Is it hard to summon that intensity?

I'm not method at all, I don't really get upset. It's acting to me, and I love doing it, and those kinds of emotional things are the funnest part.

Is it more pressure filming on, well, film, instead of digital — no unlimited takes, got to get it before the film rolls out?

We had a couple of very pointed reminders. One was the scene with Katherine and I, where we did those long monologues.

That must've been close.

Oh my god you have no idea. The first time we did it, I go first, it's like three pages, and then she goes with three additional pages, and it rolled out one line before she was done. And we all kind of stopped and looked at each other in silence, then we laughed. We didn't know whether to laugh or cry. **TK**



The game of musical chairs had reached an awkward impasse.

Queen Of Earth

★★★★★

FROM NOW / RATED M / DIRECTOR ALEX ROSS PERRY /

CAST ELISABETH MOSS, KATHERINE WATERSTON,

PATRICK FUGIT, KENTUCKER AUDLEY



WITH FRIENDS LIKE THESE...



"I DON'T WANT YOU TO SEE me like this," says Catherine (Elisabeth Moss) — swollen from crying, eyes panda'd with ruined make-up, nose scarlet — which only heightens the sense of callous voyeurism as her face fills the screen, the camera intruding obnoxiously on her grief. It places you from the very first scene in the uncomfortable role of rubbernecker to an emotional pile-up. And it just builds from there — there are so many close-ups, so many unhappy faces right in

your face, that it feels like one of those worst-party-ever situations where you're stuck on a sofa with a couple who are breaking up.

Catherine and her "friend" Virginia (Katherine Waterston) are a dysfunctional, passive-aggressive mess from the moment they meet on their way to Virginia's lake cabin — every conversation they have is freighted with history and resentment. Director Alex Ross Perry flashes back and forth in time to show the changing dynamic; but it's always a misanthropic masterclass, and the claustrophobia is heightened by the atonal score. Moss's performance of nervous collapse is staggering; whether you can enjoy it, though, depends on how much you enjoy the suffering of others. It's a bit like sitting down to a Michelin-starred plate of fermented abalone and cabbage foam: you can appreciate the artistry that's gone into it, but it's still not very pleasant.

EXTRAS None. **TIM KEEN**

ALSO OUT



Truth

★★★★★

FROM NOW / RATED M



If *Spotlight* showed us what great journalism can achieve, *Truth* is a counterpoint demonstrating the pitfalls that the modern profession faces. Interference from management, political hostility and the pressures of the 24-hour news cycle combine in a perfect storm here to bring down an institution.

Blanchett is prickly *60 Minutes* news producer Mary Mapes, a protégée of legendary anchorman Dan Rather (Robert Redford). In the run-up to the 2004 election she finds evidence that George W. Bush may have skipped part of his National Guard service, and rushes the story to the screen at the network's behest. But questions are raised about whether documents

key to her claim were forged — and Mapes finds her sources shaky and her career under threat. Instead of harassed-looking people breaking the story of a lifetime, this soon becomes a tale of harassed-looking people being forced to defend an allegation they cannot prove.

Blanchett is as good as you'd expect as a character who is more focused on results than likeability, and she has strong support from Redford in particular — making you wish that the film had focused more on the pair's interesting partnership, half mentor-mentee and half producer-presenter. But the film, ironically, doesn't really interrogate its own source, Mapes's account. And so, despite the rabble-rousing speech at the end, it can't quite back up its own contentions.

EXTRAS Q&A, featurettes, deleted scenes.

HELEN O'HARA



Spotlight

★★★★★

FROM NOW / RATED M / DIRECTOR TOM MCCARTHY /
CAST MARK RUFFALO, MICHAEL KEATON, RACHEL
MCADAMS, LIEV SCHREIBER, JOHN SLATTERY

DVD BR

AND THE WINNER IS...



THE REVENANT HAD SEEMED

the surer bet, with its raw, suffering-star turn and its extreme-wilderness cinematography, filling every frame with roaring, pounding, storming drama. But after the Best Picture envelope was torn open at this year's Oscars, another, very different film's title was read out. One in which there was no dominant performance, and which let its drama unfurl steadily in boxy, beige-and-grey interiors, to the sound of file pages being flipped and pens scratching on notebooks. *Spotlight* bagging the big award may have been a surprise but, for all *The Revenant*'s visual genius, there were some — including industry mag *Variety* — who saw justice in the quieter film, which directly tackled real issues, prevailing.

Spotlight isn't just about the Catholic church's cover-up of systemic child-abuse among its Boston clergy (and ultimately worldwide). It's also about the value of investigative journalism — that deliberate process which, 14 years on from the *Boston Globe*'s world-rattling story, has become widely devalued. It's something this

home-entertainment release touches upon with a trio of featurettes. As well as a brief group interview with the real *Globe* Spotlight team, the filmmakers and cast lament the decline of true, 'slow' journalism which, as McCarthy says, "is a fundamental aspect of democracy."

Sadly these extras are more cursory than the film deserves. But at least *Spotlight* itself makes its points cogently and efficiently, much like the team at its heart (portrayed by Michael Keaton, Mark Ruffalo, Rachel McAdams and Brian d'Arcy James). Of course, nobody is perfect, and some of the most powerful moments in *Spotlight* come when the limits of journalism, and journalists, are tested: most obviously when one character realises he'd allowed this story to slip through his fingers years before, or when another's concern to maintain exclusivity seemingly supercedes the public-interest value.

Like all great procedurals, there is joy to be had in watching based-on-reality people such as Walter Robinson (Keaton) and Mike Rezendes (Ruffalo) being really bloody good at what they do and making what they do count. And this is a masterclass in ensemble-wrangling, too, with the talents already mentioned bolstered by Stanley Tucci as the cantankerous lawyer in the thick of a pivotal case, and Liev Schreiber as the calmly diligent editor who sidesteps shouty-movie-boss clichés, nudging the investigation firmly but gently along. Rather like McCarthy himself, in fact, who, appropriately enough, has ensured this entire team of everyday heroes is played by people who are really bloody good at what they do and who make what they do count.

EXTRAS Three featurettes.

DAN JOLIN

ALSO OUT



Rise Of The Foot Soldier Part II

★★★★★

FROM NOW / RATED MA15+

DVD BR

"I will die with dignity," proclaims soccer-hooligan-turned-professional-criminal Carlton Leach, but there's precious little nobility in the follow-up to 2007's *Rise Of The Footsoldier*. You don't need to have seen the original to know the cause of his fatalism, but it would certainly help.

Reeling from the loss of his best friends and partners in crime in the infamous, real-life Essex Range Rover murders, Leach's paranoia helpfully manifests itself in blood-splattered flashbacks. Cliché-filled narration and 2D supporting characters fill in the blanks as Leach puts family commitments on the backburner in favour of strippers and coke as he attempts to go out on a high — in more ways than one.

'90s neons and piano house are the order of the day, but beneath the alcohol-soaked revelry lies the all-too-real fact that Carlton's days are numbered. You can't blame a man for surrounding himself with his most reliable companions in times of trouble, but Leach takes it to the next level with cattle prod-bearing doormen and bald henchmen who would give Spectre's Mr. Hinx a run for his money. The club scene at home and abroad provides a sanctuary for the former West Ham thug — and a way to prove himself to those who think he may be losing his touch. With the men front and centre, women are resigned to gangland stereotypes: 'Irish girl who knows when to keep her mouth shut' and 'disgruntled wife' being the two most complex. "Gypsies" also get a rough deal, painted as en vogue pests with incredibly broad strokes.

Bone-crunching blandness and profanity-spouting monotony aside, Ricci Hartnett shows some promise as a director: the Jim-Broadbent-in-*Filth*-inspired Steven Berkoff and a *Mikado*-singing villain prove he's not scared of the leftfield. But *Part II* (setting itself up for a *Godfather*-style *Part III*?) takes itself far too seriously, and is for diehard fans only.

EXTRAS None. EMMA THROWER

Class Of 1984

★★★★★

1982 / FROM NOW / RATED R18+ / DIRECTOR MARK L. LESTER / CAST PERRY KING, TIMOTHY VAN PATTEN, RODDY MCDOWALL, MICHAEL J. FOX

BR

WE DON'T NEED NO EDUCATION



CONTROVERSIAL WHEN first released and still packing a brutal punch in this beautifully collated Blu-ray release, director Mark L. Lester's sleazy gore-fest proves alarmingly prophetic, despite a tendency to wallow in its unpleasantly exploitative roots.

Lester, who went on to film *Firestarter* and *Commando*, along with fellow writers Tom Holland (*Fright Night*, *Child's Play*) and John C.W. Saxton (*Happy Birthday To Me*), obviously didn't think that their school days were the best days of their lives: the school depicted in *Class Of 1984* is a war zone where teachers have all but given up the fight to educate the psychotic school bullies who prowl the corridors.

This is where music teacher Andrew Norris



(Perry King) comes in. Still naively hoping to inspire, he runs foul of a group of punks, led by crackpot slime-ball and virtuoso pianist Peter Stegman (a venomous turn by Timothy Van Patten), who make the educator's life a living hell. Soon revenge is on the curriculum and the hoodlums all pass with flying colours. Mostly blood red.

With a searing punk aesthetic, a delightful performance by Rodney McDowall as a fellow

teacher who takes to educating kids at gunpoint, a pre-fame Michael J. Fox fighting for his life and *School's Out* crooner Alice Cooper belting out the theme song, this is high class trash with a surprisingly prescient message.

EXTRAS Commentary, featurettes, interviews with the director, composer Lalo Schiffrin, actors Perry King, Erin Noble and Lisa Langlois, stills gallery, trailers plus a 20-page booklet.

DAVID MICHAEL BROWN

ALSO OUT



Alien Nation

★★★★★

1988 / FROM NOW / RATED M

DVD BR

Alien refugees struggle to be accepted in society (this pre-dates *District 9* by 20 years); LAPD cop Sykes (James Caan) is partnered with the first "Newcomer" detective (Mandy Patinkin.) In defter hands, it could have been a minor classic – the plot is solid, it's packed with clever details – but it's as subtle as an anvil. Caan bellowing "It's in his ass!" in the joke-telling scene just about sums up the movie: sly humour spoiled by a brute force approach. Likewise, as an allegory on racism, it's a blunt instrument, but that's '80s action movies for you – *Lethal Weapon* isn't *Hamlet*, either – although the novelty of aliens in LA elevates it above other boilerplate cop flicks.

EXTRAS Behind the scenes, interviews. **TIM KEEN**



Night Of The Living Dead

★★★★★

1990 / FROM NOW / RATED R18+

DVD BR

Originally decried as a desperate exercise in cash-grabbing grave-robbery, latex legend Tom Savini's remake of his long-time collaborator George Romero's midnight movie classic holds up surprisingly well in this *The Walking Dead* sated age. Written by Romero, who at the time had seen no money from the original, Savini's restrained zombie fest may lack the guttural punch of the 1968 gamechanger but his cast, especially *Candyman* star Tony Todd, ensures that the tension building inside the farm house where the survivors have holed up engrosses more than the flesh-eating threat outside.

EXTRAS Savini commentary, featurettes, more.

DAVID MICHAEL BROWN



Dr. Strangelove

★★★★★

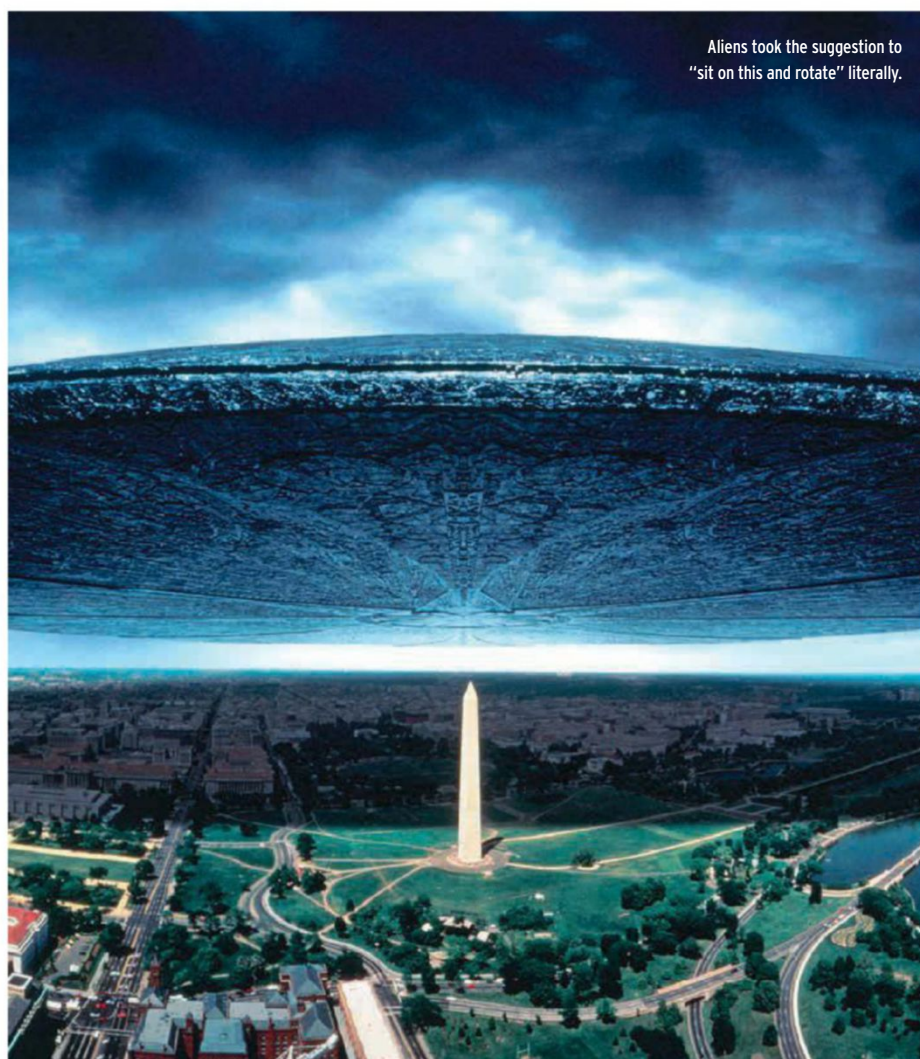
1964 / FROM NOW / RATED PG

DVD BR

Looking gorgeously noirish on Blu-ray, Stanley Kubrick's 1964 "nightmare comedy" has the Cold War turn hot when a renegade US general launches an attack on an equally demented, equally tooled-up Soviet Union. With Peter Sellers in three roles, Slim Pickens riding a bomb, George C. Scott calculating casualty figures in megadeaths and the funniest, scariest phone conversation ever heard on film.

EXTRAS A significant upgrade from the DVD Special Edition, carrying over all the extras from that and adding a new documentary about the film, plus pop-up interviews with real Strangelovian pundits from the era.

KIM NEWMAN



Aliens took the suggestion to "sit on this and rotate" literally.

Independence Day

★★★★★

1996 / FROM NOW / RATED PG / DIRECTOR ROLAND EMMERICH / CAST WILL SMITH, BILL PULLMAN, JEFF GOLDBLUM, MARY MCDONNELL, JUDD HIRSCH, ROBERT LOGGIA, RANDY QUAID

DVD BR

WHITE HOUSE DOWN



SELL THE SIZZLE, NOT THE STEAK, is the salesman's mantra. And with a White House-detonating publicity fusillade that remains one of its most memorable aspects, no movie has embraced flogging itself as enthusiastically as Roland Emmerich's career-making sci-fi/disaster behemoth. But what about the meat beneath the fondly remembered commercial ballyhoo: is it fine fillet or cheap chuck?

Despite its makers' claims to the contrary, re-inventing the alien-invasion trope was hardly a new idea, even back in '96. Smash-hit miniseries *V* had seen malevolent saucers hovering over the world's capitals only a decade earlier. But movie-wise, the timing was perfect. Spielberg's *E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial* and *Close Encounters of The Third Kind* had established a

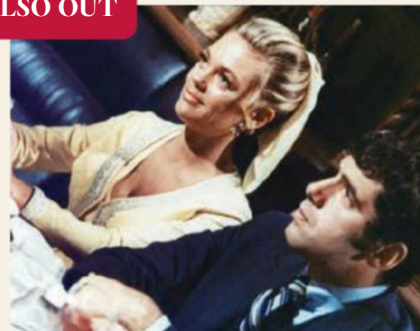


'friendly alien' motif that begged to be shattered, and Emmerich obliges, gleefully delivering action and comedy beats with crowd-pleasing precision. There's still a thrill in seeing *Saved By The Bell: The College Years* star Kiersten Warren as a drippy hippie blown to smithereens atop a skyscraper as she welcomes our new alien overlords. It also boasts the director's most appealing cast, a classy crew of character actors headed up by the unlikely double act of Jeff Goldblum and Will Smith.

EXTRAS All cleaned up for its 20th birthday, *ID4* looks spiffy and the extras are bountiful: a new half-hour documentary with cast and crew interviews (the gaping hole is Will Smith, who left early on in the sequel's development), gag reels, alternative ending and assorted ephemera. Unpretentious, satisfying rump, then.

ADAM SMITH

ALSO OUT



Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice

★★★★★

1969 / FROM NOW / RATED M

DVD

Though once sceptical of the bohemian lifestyle of their era, married couple Bob and Carol (Robert Culp and Natalie Wood) attend a group therapy retreat and leave sexually liberated. Their subsequent embrace of unfiltered honesty and overt sexuality startles their best friends, the modest and repressed Ted and Alice (Elliot Gould and Dyan Cannon), and the result is a hilarious campaign to liberate the conservative couple. It's farcical at times, but provides significant psychological insight to chew on as director Paul Mazursky questions the moral ambiguity of the free-loving '60s with commendable panache.

EXTRAS None. JG



Barfly

★★★★★

1987 / FROM NOW / RATED M

DVD BR

An affectionate paean to booze-soaked nihilism, written by the poet laureate of Skid Row, Charles Bukowski; world-weary alcoholic genius Henry Chinaski wanders aimlessly through the bars and bedrooms of '80s LA. Chinaski is Bukowski's Tyler Durden, with Mickey Rourke's Snagglepuss diction ("Exit, stage left even"); but the whole thing leans too heavily on juvenile fantasy – of winning fistfights against stronger bullies, of women fighting over who loves you the most, of rich beautiful women who fall in love with unemployed drunks. Watch with a strong drink.

EXTRAS Commentary, making-of. TK



Black Sails: literally rated Arrrrrr.

ALSO OUT



The Night Manager

★★★★★

FROM NOW / RATED MA15+



The BBC's big budget John le Carré adaptation has a simple set-up – a hotel employee-turned-spy (Tom Hiddleston) weevils his way into the inner circle of an abominable arms dealer (Hugh Laurie) and tries not to die – but the results are slick and sophisticated. It's an infiltration thriller with all the class of *Notorious*. **NDS**



Vinyl

★★★★★

FROM JUNE 8 / RATED MA15+



A Martin Scorsese-produced series set in the '70s NYC music scene? How could *Vinyl* go wrong? And yet somehow a combo of flaccid plotting, clichéd characters and clunky music cameos turns this sure-fire supergroup into a sub-par cover band. At least it looks good, and the story eventually improves. Maybe just listen to the excellent soundtrack instead? **AM**



Heroes Reborn

★★★★★

FROM NOW / RATED MA15+



Heroes' demise is something creator Tim Kring has struggled with since its 2010 cancellation, and this 13-part miniseries is his apology. But it isn't satisfying. The conspiracy yarn is half-baked and the show's new stars too bland. With several of the original's best characters absent, *heroes* are precisely what this follow-up lacks. **WT**

Black Sails: S3

★★★★★

FROM JUNE 8 / RATED R18+ / CREATORS JONATHAN E. STEINBERG, ROBERT LEVINE / CAST TOBY STEPHENS, HANNAH NEW, LUKE ARNOLD, RAY STEVENSON, ZACH MCGOWAN



PIRATE TV



SEASON TWO OF *BLACK SAILS* ended with two big developments: Fort Nassau was destroyed, and Silver (Luke Arnold) lost his leg. Silver's leg isn't coming back, but Fort Nassau has to be rebuilt if the

pirates are going to survive the inevitable return of the British. Unfortunately, Flint (Toby Stephens), all but driven mad by Miranda's death, is too blinded by rage to be the leader the pirates need — especially now that Blackbeard (Ray Stevenson) is on the scene. Even when almost all the pirates are on the same side there's still plenty of scheming going on, and thankfully this season kills off a few regulars to clear the decks a little. Stevenson is a great addition and Silver continues to grow as a character, but it's the big action set-pieces (there's an awesome storm in episode two) that make this more than a flamboyantly costumed quasi-historical talk-fest. It's not quite the rollicking adventure a *Treasure Island* prequel should be, but, shiver me timbers, it's getting there.

EXTRAS Behind-the-scenes, featurettes.

ANTHONY MORRIS

BONUS FEATURE

SILVER DREAM MACHINE

LUKE ARNOLD ON HIS CHARACTER'S RISE TO LEADER OF MEN

After losing his leg at the end of Season 2, how does Silver find a way to go on?

I think of Silver as the guy who always had one leg out the door and then they cut it off. Going into Season 3 he decides the best life for him now is to continue to be a part of the crew of the *Walrus*, take on the position of quartermaster and take some responsibility for once. Which probably would have gone better if Captain Flint was in a different state of mind when Season 3 starts.

It's been a surprise to see antagonists Silver and Flint working together this season. Is this a double-act with a future?

Definitely by the end of Season 3, as that Flint-Silver relationship

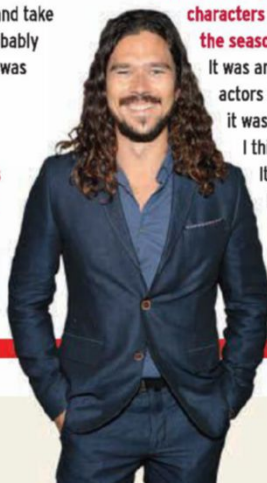
continues, there's some understanding that one of them is going to be the end of the other one. When you have two such strong forces right up against each other, it can't continue for too long.

Black Sails began as an action romp, but the characters have really grown and developed over the seasons. Was this a surprise?

It was an interesting thing – the creators and the actors on the show went in understanding that it was a character-driven drama, whereas

I think the audience weren't expecting that. It's great to see people who are surprised by the show and the depth that the writers have put into these particular characters. It's not the pirate show that everyone thought it was going to be.

AM



“This is
a cyclical
journey,
bathed in
heartache.”

The Life And Death Of Colonel Blimp

1943 / OUT NOW / RATED G

MAN O' WAR

WINSTON CHURCHILL'S SECRET MEMO was handwritten. And he was livid: “Pray propose to me the measures necessary to stop this foolish production.” To be fair, with World War II in the balance, he had a lot on his mind in August 1942. The last thing he needed was a pair of upstart filmmakers proposing some satire detrimental to the morale of his British army. To his mind, *The Life And Death Of Colonel Blimp* was a matter of life and death. Democracy being democracy, Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger (hence forward P&P) carried on, using borrowed military uniforms and vehicles.

Created by cartoonist David Low, *Blimp* was a slap-headed blowhard with a moustache the size of a coat hanger and the temperament of a blunderbuss. Stephen Fry's General Melchett in *Blackadder Goes Forth* is pure Blimperry. Out of earshot, Churchill was widely considered an inspiration.

What the PM missed was that rather than simply amplify the joke, P&P (Powell directing, Pressburger writing and producing; the joins rarely showing) were creating a British *Citizen Kane*, a stirring attempt to encompass a nation within a single figure.

Not unlike *Kane*, their film is constructed as a series of flashbacks, here more like three movements in a grand symphony. We begin with the cliché of Blimp: Major-General Clive Wynne-Candy (Roger Livesey) in his corpulent dotage, shining dome of the Home Guard, captured at his Turkish baths in London, unperturbed by World War II. He's been outwitted before a training exercise (irony ahoy: Candy may be a military man to his bones, but we only see him partake in mock versions of warfare).

“But war starts at MIDNIGHT!” bellows the old-timer,



1 Young Candy (Roger Livesey) takes tea with Edith Hunter (Deborah Kerr) in Berlin.

2 The now ageing Candy is surprised in his Turkish bath mid-World War II.

3 Theo (Anton Walbrook) and Candy duelling.

cake, you have both an illustration of the film's ironies (history is always out of frame) and one of British cinema's greatest shots. The film is a technical marvel. Here began P&P's love affair with Technicolor. Here are shots to make even Martin Scorsese (who championed its 1985 restoration) weak at the knees, not just for their ingenuity, but how they enlarge the film's ideas. A montage of hunting trophies on Candy's wall ends with a jolt at a German helmet, heralding World War I (war and hunting being much the same to our hero).

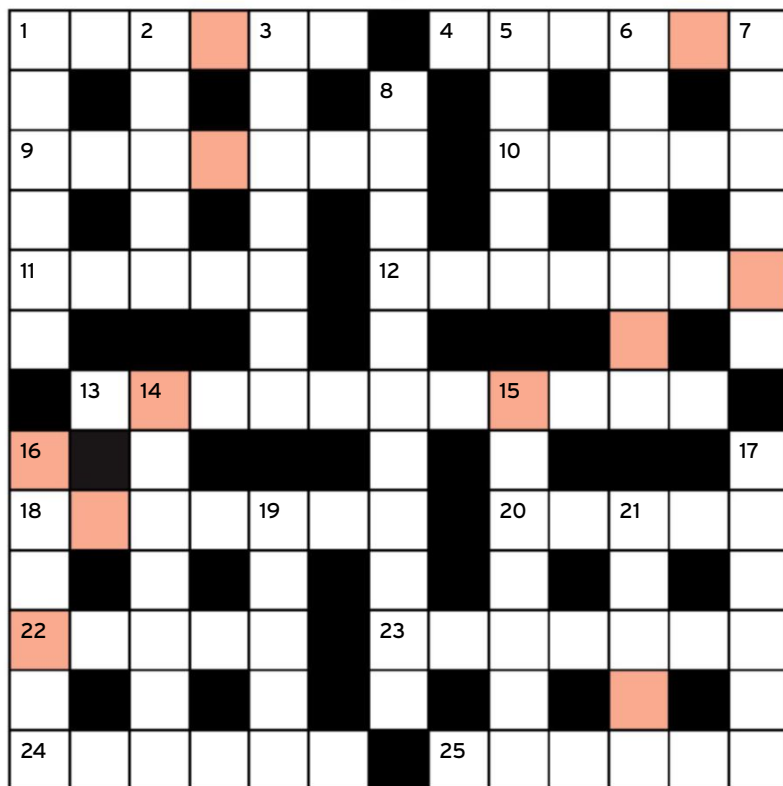
The trumpet-brash Livesey had replaced Laurence Olivier, who became suspiciously detained by the Air Fleet Arm at the 11th hour. He now feels irreplaceable. Debonair and hilariously sneaky, Candy is anything but straightforward. Livesey plays sublime cadences of almost-reflection, tiny echoes of a great sadness that might consume him if he dared admit it was there.

Of the view a few metaphysics never hurt anyone, P&P cast Deborah Kerr, only 21, as three incarnations of the same woman. Edith/Barbara/Angela is Candy's Rosebud, the ideal he chases throughout his life. But happiness eludes him. Candy is so busy doing the right thing, he never feels the right thing.

In contrast to the English, we have a reflective Germany. Or, at least, Theo's lost Germany — P&P are at pains to emphasise he is a German, not a Nazi. “This is not a gentleman's war,” Theo insists of World War II. He has lost all, but learned everything. Candy has barely caught glimmers. Dependable and brave as Blimp might be, P&P are hardly advocating a return to the notion of wars fought with a public-school rulebook. By the end, Candy sadly acknowledges he has no part in Churchill's plans, but he still salutes the new guard as they march past.

WORDS
NICK DE SEMLYEN

THE EMPIRE CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1 Denzel's 2012 airline jaunt (6)
- 4 Law violations that will be true for Charlotte Gainsbourg this year (6)
- 9 Maya seen in *Bridesmaids* (7)
- 10 In which Emma Thompson provided the voice of Queen Elinor (5)
- 11 Beach featured in *Saving Private Ryan's* opening sequence (5)
- 12 Rodent dash with Rowan Atkinson and Whoopi Goldberg (3,4)
- 13 She directed *Selma* (3,8)
- 18 Cold War movie that starred Charles Bronson and Lee Remick (7)
- 20 Autobiographical tale of a Mafia don portrayed by Armand Assante (5)
- 22 Dinwiddie seen in *Raven's Touch*, *Elena Undone* etc. (5)
- 23 Marilyn Monroe and "a raging torrent of emotion that even nature can't control" (7)
- 24 She and her sisters won three Oscars in 1986 (6)
- 25 Marlon Brando's acting style (6)

DOWN

- 1 Mia, star of 13 Woody Allen films (6)
- 2 Land to which Judy Davis once booked a passage (5)
- 3 Tom cast as Lucas Bennett in *The Impossible* (7)
- 5 The kind of overlords encountered by Ben Kingsley and Gillian Anderson (5)
- 6 She was Sloane Peterson in *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* (3,4)
- 7 Spielberg, Zaillian or Seagal maybe (6)
- 8 Alejandro González Iñárritu's biographical endurance tale (3,8)
- 14 From which a love scene between Richard Burton and Ian McShane was famously cut (7)
- 15 "Get a handle on the scandal" read the tagline for this 2005 satire (3,4)
- 16 Lilo's pet (6)
- 17 Oz's most famous resident (6)
- 19 Mexican painter Kahlo, portrayed by Salma Hayek (5)
- 21 As found in a garbage dump by Rooney Mara and co. (5)

MAY ANSWERS ACROSS 7 Prince, 8 Exodus, 9 Alda, 10 Everyday, 11 Contact, 13 Jet Li, 15 Sheen, 17 Tootsie, 20 Brooklyn, 21 Kite, 22 Noiret, 23 Enigma.

DOWN 1 Grillo, 2 Anna, 3 Rebecca, 4 Fever, 5 Body Heat, 6 Duvall, 12 The Hours, 14 Sounder, 16 Herzog, 18 In Time, 19 Klute 21 Kris.

ANAGRAM Cate Blanchett



WIN! The X-Files Season 10 on Blu-ray plus poster!

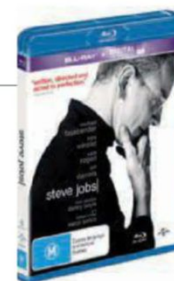
MULDER AND SCULLY ARE BACK IN THIS YEAR'S six-episode *X-Files* revival, 14 years after the series closed its ninth season. If you think the truth is still out there, try and win a copy of the reboot season, plus a "I want to believe" poster to, erm... boot.



TO WIN, TELL US YOUR FAVOURITE SUPERNATURAL CREATURE, AND WHY.

WIN! Steve Jobs on DVD

GET TO KNOW THE BESPECTACLED TECH GENIUS known almost as well for his turtle-neck collection as for his hundred-billion-dollar company. Chances are you own something invented by the guy, so win one of 10 DVDs to learn the story behind your iPhone.



TO WIN, TELL US WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE BIOPIC, AND WHY.

WIN! Fear And Loathing In Las Vegas on Blu-ray

CHASE THE AMERICAN DREAM WITH JOHNNY Depp and Benicio del Toro as they take the "high" road to Las Vegas in Terry Gilliam's dazed and confused adaptation of Hunter S. Thompson's gonzo classic. Those "too weird to live, too rare to die" can win one of 10 Blu-rays.



TO WIN, TELL US WHAT YOUR FAVOURITE ROAD MOVIE IS, AND WHY.



WIN! Via Vision Blu-ray Set

DAVID CRONENBERG COLLECTION! GLORY! THE MOTHMAN PROPHECIES! THE Seventh Sign! Ghosts Of The Abyss 3D! All these awesome titles can be yours, on Blu-ray, thanks to Via Vision. We have four sets of high-def goodness to giveaway. Win and your Blu-ray collection will be bigger than ever!

TO WIN, TELL US WHAT YOUR FAVOURITE CRONENBERG FILM IS, AND WHY.



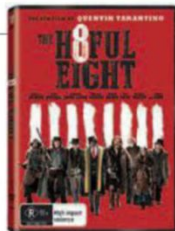
WIN! A Bumper DVD Pack

TO CELEBRATE THE RELEASE OF *HUNT FOR THE WILDERPEOPLE*, THOSE lovely folk at Madman want two lucky readers to take home a bumper DVD pack each including *What We Do In The Shadows*, *Bernie*, *Sleeping With Other People*, *Life Of Crime* and *Frank*. You'd be mad not to enter.

TO WIN, TELL US WHO YOUR FAVOURITE KIWI ACTOR IS, AND WHY.

WIN! The Hateful Eight on DVD

SAMUEL L. JACKSON, KURT RUSSELL, TIM ROTH and Michael Madsen starring in a QT joint with an Ennio Morricone score? Count us excited and not at all hateful! To see Tarantino's frosty Western homage to John Carpenter's *The Thing*, don't be a square, just answer the question below.



TO WIN, TELL US WHAT YOUR FAVOURITE TARANTINO MOVIE IS, AND WHY.

WIN! Dirty Grandpa on DVD

THE GLORY DAYS OF *TAXI DRIVER* MAY SEEM A long way off but if brazen, unapologetic fun is what you're after, then win one of 10 DVDs we have up for grabs to see Robert De Niro play a lady-chasing senior citizen with Zac Efron in tow as his uptight heartthrob of a grandson.



TO WIN, TELL US YOUR FAVOURITE ROBERT DE NIRO ROLE, AND WHY.

WIN! Black Sails Season 3 on Blu-ray or DVD

AHOY THERE SHIPMATES! THE THIRD SEASON OF *Black Sails* has dropped anchor and we have five copies on each format to giveaway. Answer the question below and this bountiful booty could be yours. Did we mention it's the first television show to be rated "Rrrrrrr"? Sorry.



TO WIN, TELL US WHO YOUR FAVOURITE MOVIE PIRATE IS, AND WHY.

HOW TO ENTER

To win any of these prizes, email us at empiregiveaways@bauer-media.com.au, write the prize in the subject line, your preferred format if there are both DVD or Blu-ray options and complete the answer in 25 words or less, not forgetting to include your contact details. All competitions are open to both Australian and New Zealander *Empire* readers. Entries close July 1, 2016. For conditions of entry visit www.bauer-media.com.au/terms/competition-terms

CAPTION COMPETITION



Dazzle us with your caption, O Reader!

The Founder

CAST MICHAEL KEATON LINDA CARDELLINI, NICK OFFERMAN, PATRICK WILSON, LAURA DERN / DIRECTOR JOHN LEE HANCOCK

CAPTION THE PICTURE ABOVE AND WIN STUFF!

WIN!

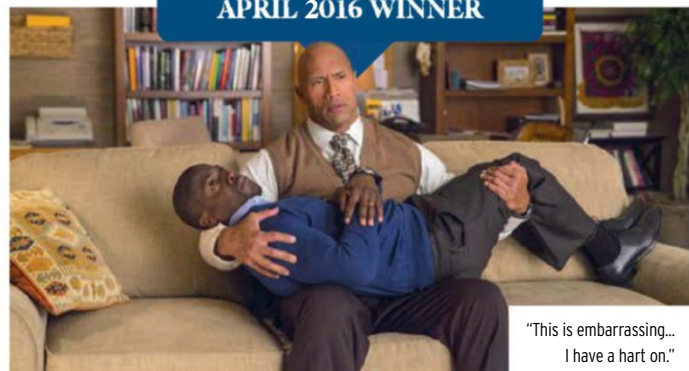
TWO ALL BEEF PATTIES, SPECIAL SAUCE, lettuce, cheese, pickles, onions on a another fabulous performance from Michael Keaton. That's what we're hoping for in the McBiopic of the man who gave us the golden arches. We're also hoping for an awesomely hilarious caption, from you the reader, for the image from *The Founder* above. If we do, the best will take home a copy of the R. L. Stine spookfest *Goosebumps* on Blu-ray and a promo T-shirt!



THE FOUNDER WILL BE SERVED UP IN CINEMAS FROM AUGUST 25.

HOW TO ENTER In 10 words or less email your caption with the subject June 2016 Caption Comp to empiregiveaways@bauer-media.com.au. The winner will be published in the August 2016 edition of *Empire*.

APRIL 2016 WINNER



Congratulations Keegan Marc! You have won a bumper crop of discs including *Mr. Robot*, *Scout's Guide To The Zombie Apocalypse* and more!



EMPIRE CLASSIC SCENE

Zombieland

"BILL MURRAY, YOU'RE A ZOMBIE?"

SETTING THE SCENE Screenwriters Rhett Reese and Paul Wernick, who most recently brought us *Deadpool*, knew they wanted a big cameo in their zombie horror-comedy. More specifically, they wanted a movie star who would happily play a funhouse version of himself, as one of the last survivors of the undead apocalypse. They tried to land Kevin Bacon, Joe Pesci, Sylvester Stallone and many more, before landing the biggest fish of all: Bill Murray. The resulting sequences are giddy fun, as Murray apologises for *Garfield*, acts out *Ghostbusters* with a vacuum cleaner and scares our heroes by pretending to be a walking corpse. Good news for zom-com fans and Twinkie addicts: *Zombieland 2* is in pre-production now, also with Reese and Wernick writing.

INT. MANSION — DAY

In a vast drawing room, Wichita (Emma Stone) hits golf balls with a club, while Tallahassee (Woody Harrelson) dances to the *Ghostbusters* theme. Wichita skewers a shot and hits Tallahassee on the head, knocking him to the floor.

Wichita: Shiiiiit!

Tallahassee looks up as a figure lurches into the room, face blood-stained, hair long and stringy.

Tallahassee: Bill Murray, you're a zombie?

As Murray bends down to Tallahassee, Wichita hits him with the golf club. He yells out in pain.

Bill Murray: Ah! Ow! God, I'm on fire! Ouch!

Tallahassee: You're not a zombie. You're talking. You're okay!

Bill Murray: The hell I am!

Wichita: I'm sorry. I didn't know that it was... that it was *you* you.

Tallahassee: Are you... What's with the... the get-up?

Bill Murray: Oh, I do it to blend in. Y'know, zombies don't mess with other zombies. Buddy of mine — make-up guy — showed me how to do this: corn starch, y'know, some berries, a little liquorice for the ladies. It suits my lifestyle, y'know? I like to get out and do stuff. Just played nine holes on the Riviera, just walked on — nobody there.

Tallahassee: Goddammit! [*Punches the air*] **BILL FUCKING MURRAY!** I had to get that out, I don't mean to gush. This is so surreal. I mean, you probably get this all the time — maybe not lately — but I'm, I'm such a huge fan of yours. I mean, I swear, y'know, I have seen every one of your movies a million times and I, I even love your dramatic

roles, and just... everything. Six people left in the world, one of them is Bill fuckin' Murray! I know that's not your middle name, but I've been watching you since I was, like, since I could masturbate! I mean, not that they're connected... [*imitating Caddyshack's Carl Spackler*] "Now a former greenskeeper, about to become the Masters champion..." [*He boxes the air in delight.*]

Murray: Well, that's why we do it.

Tallahassee (*kissing Murray's hand*): I love you, Bill. I love you.

Murray bows and mouths, "Thank you."

Tallahassee: Thank *you*.

Murray turns to Wichita.

Murray: You are staring at me. It's a hairpiece. [*Moving it up and down*] It's a piece!

Wichita: I'm sorry. No, it's just that you look remarkably like Eddie Van Halen.

Murray: I just saw Eddie Van Halen.

Wichita: Nuh-uh?

Tallahassee: Really?

Murray: Yeah.

Wichita: Wow.

Tallahassee: Where?

Murray: At the Hollywood Bowl.

Tallahassee: Man, how was that?

Murray: He's a zombie.

Wichita: Aw, that's... tough break.



THE MOTHMAN PROPHECIES

John Klein (Richard Gere), a Washington newspaper reporter leaves his job after his wife (Debra Messing) dies to investigate strange reports, including psychic visions ("Prophecies") and sightings of winged creatures ("Mothmen"), in a small West Virginia town, that may be the signs of an alien invasion of Earth!

Special Features include: "Making of" featurette.



DAVID CRONENBERG COLLECTION

- Rabid
- Shivers
- The Dead Zone

This fantastic boxset includes 3 iconic films from master Horror Director David Cronenberg: *Shivers*, *Rabid* and *The Dead Zone*. An abundance of bonus features include Commentaries (*Rabid*/*The Dead Zone*) and the "Making of" *Shivers*! Starring Marilyn Chambers, Christopher Walken, Martin Sheen.



DR. STRANGELOVE

Nominated for four Academy Awards including Best Picture (1964), Stanley Kubrick's comedy about a group of paranoia-inspired, war-happy generals who manage to initiate an "accidental" nuclear apocalypse, is horribly frightening, delightfully funny and surprisingly relevant to this day.

Special Features include: "Inside: Dr. Strangelove or: how I learned to stop worrying and the love bomb".



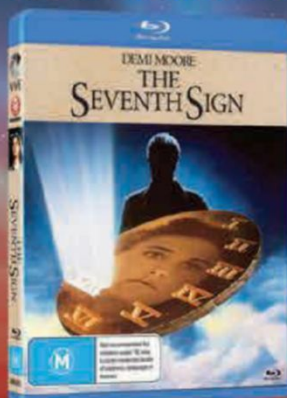
GLORY



The heart-stopping story of the first black regiment to fight for the North in the Civil War, *GLORY* stars Matthew Broderick, Cary Elwes, Morgan Freeman and Denzel Washington in his Oscar® winning performance.

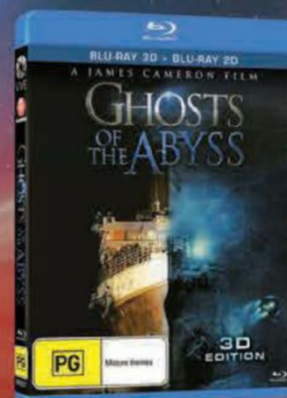
Special Features includes Deleted Scenes, The Making of, The True Story of Glory.

THE SEVENTH SIGN



Demi Moore (*About Last Night*) stars as Abby Quinn, a young woman who discovers that she and her unborn child play a terrifying part in the chain of events destined to end the world. Can one woman alone stand between the wrath of God and the future of mankind?

GHOSTS OF THE ABYSS



James Cameron, the Academy Award-winning Director of *Titanic*, journeys back to the site of his greatest inspiration - the *Titanic*. During the voyage you will peer deep into the haunting remains of the once-great ship. An abundance of bonus material includes the magnificent 3D feature.



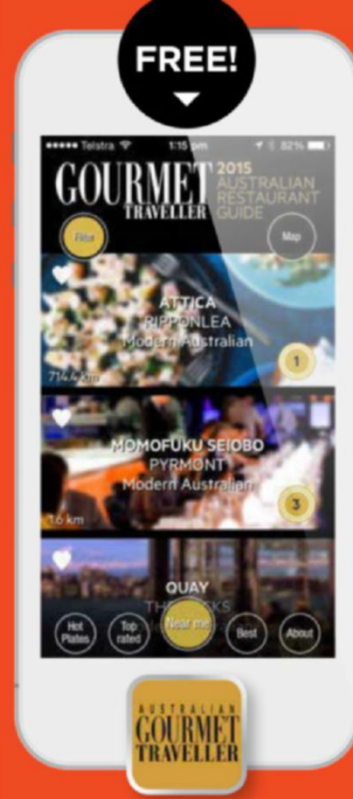
Rugby League Week +



Dolly Doctor



Harper's Bazaar TV



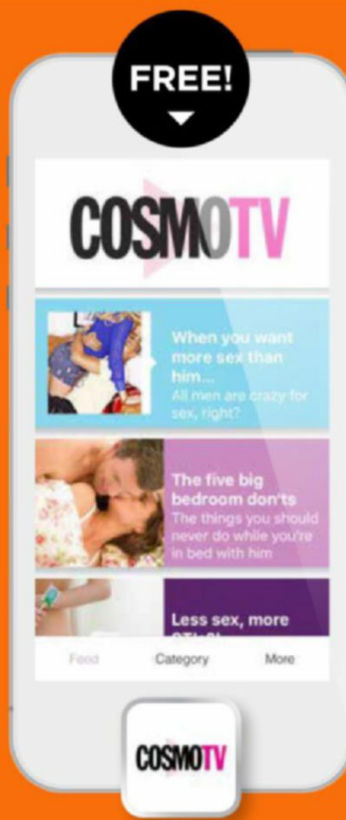
Gourmet Traveller Restaurant Guide 2015



Gourmet Fast



TV Week



Cosmo TV



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